

32588





Aeneas finds the
Golden Bough



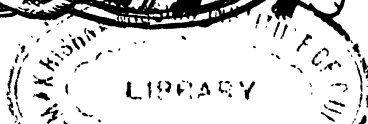
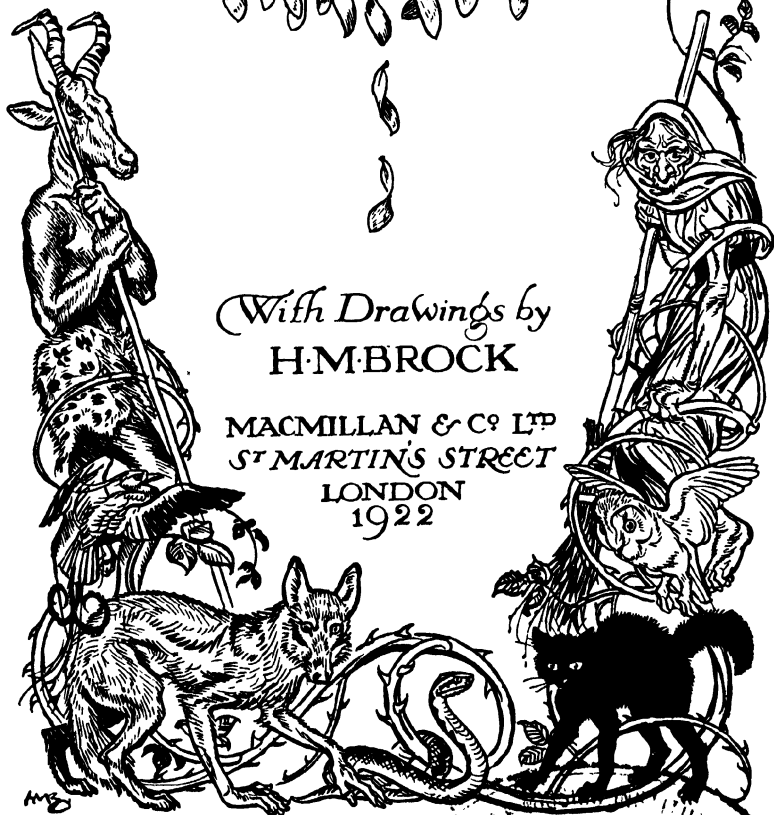
LEAVES FROM THE GOLDEN BOUGH

Culled by
LADY FRAZER



(With Drawings by
H.M. BROCK

MACMILLAN & CO. LTD
ST MARTIN'S STREET
LONDON
1922



COPYRIGHT

R.M.I.C. LIBRARY	
Acc. No.	32588
Class	100
Date	
St	
C	✓
C	✓
C	✓
C	
C	amy

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE

THE Yule log throws out its glowing flames, the many coloured candles of the Christmas tree flicker in their sockets, the musicians tune up, and all is as merry as a marriage bell, while we saunter, and maybe we kiss, under the clusters of the mistletoe. How many of us know, and if we do know, how many remember then, that the mistletoe is Virgil's Golden Bough, that Æneas carried it with him on his descent into the gloomy subterranean world? We are well content to forget all crabbed learning, all sadness on the Day of Days. Ghosts and hobgoblins may mope and gibber in the gloom; witches may flit by on broomsticks overhead; fairies and dapper elves may foot it merrily in the moonshine, but they affright us not. For we are lapped in dreams, golden dreams, dreams more real than the realities of everyday life, and we pray to dream on awhile of all the bygone visionary world.

Young friends may be assured that I love them too well to arouse them from their beautiful reveries. I have culled these stray leaves and sifted them for

PREFACE

those who are in the spring-tide of their years. I do not wish to teach, my aim is to amuse, to please. The author of the books which are called *The Golden Bough* has ransacked the literature of the whole world to illustrate points entirely his own, points which do not concern us here. The tales are told in the author's own words; his magic wand has changed them into music; and the labour in which I delighted has merely been to weave the silver-lined leaves into a garland for the young.

LILLY FRAZER.

CONTENTS

PART I

CHRISTMAS AND THE MISTLETOE

	PAGE
The Golden Bough	3
The Mistletoe as Lightning-conductor, as Master-key, as Protection against Sorcery	12
The Hays of Errol	13
The Cattle's Conversation on Christmas Eve	15
The Yule Log in Servia	16

PART II

UNCANNY BEINGS

The Omnipresence of Demons	23
The Demons of Abbot Richalm	25
The Witches' Sabbath	26
The Were-Wolves	28
The External Soul	35
The <i>Ustrels</i>	38
Trees tenanted by Spirits	41
Sedna	44
Smoking out the Witches	46
The Jinnee of the Sea	48

CONTENTS

PART III

QUAINT CUSTOMS

	PAGE
The Doctor and his Patients	53
Cure of Jaundice	54
Cures for Toothache	57
Magical Images	58
Magic Virtue of a Blind Cat and other Creatures	60
Longevity Clothes	62
Rain-making in China	63
Binding the Wind by Magic	66
Precautions against Witchcraft	73
Marriage of the Holy Basil	76
Threatening Tree Spirits	78
Wild Thyme, Elder Flowers, and Fern	81
The Magic Flowers at Midsummer Eve : The Springwort and the Woodpecker ; The White Chicory	82
Sawing the Old Woman	84
"Seize the Old Man "	86
Carnival Burnt	90
Carnival of Lerida	92
The Carnival of Viza	94
Battle of Summer and Winter	97
Queen of Winter and Queen of May	100
Mock Beheading of the King on Whit-Monday	102
The Magic Spring	103
Candles lighted to keep off the Witches	108
The Pigs of the Parson's Wife	108
Divining Rods	112
The Baby in the Winnowing Basket	113
Spinning Töps and Masquerades	115
Swinging, Cat's Cradles, and Songs	117

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Games in Honour of Dead Warriors . . .	121
Games assuming the Character of a Great Fair . . .	122
Children of the Moon and Shooting Stars . . .	125
The Giants of Dunkirk	126
King Hop	128
The Fire-walk	131
Maraké	132
Bear Festivals	134
Funeral Oration to the Bear	139
Propitiation of Dead Whales	142
Sables and Beavers	146
Sacred Lions, Leopards, Boa Constrictors, Toads, and Scorpions	149
Bilking an Ostrich's Ghost	154
Fish treated with Respect	155
The Birth of the Grand Lama	158
Kings of Fire and Water	161
The Feast of Lanterns	165
The Saving Virtue of a Nail	167

PART IV

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

St. Romain delivers Rouen from the Dragon . . .	173
Isis and the Sun God	178
The Death of Adonis	181
Persephone and Demeter	183
How the Sea-Dyaks learnt to plant Rice	184
Why the Rajahs of Nagpur have the Serpent for their Crest	187
King Athamas	189
King Vikramaditya	191

CONTENTS

PART V

STORIES

	PAGE
The Miller's Wife and the Two Grey Cats	197
Punchkin and the Parrot	199
Koshchei the Deathless	200
The Dragon of the Water-mill	202
True Steel	205
The Soulless King	206
The Giant whose Soul was in a Duck's Egg	210
Headless Hugh	211
The Helpful Animals	212
The Jinnee and the Sparrow	216
The Heart in the Flower of the Acacia	217
The Wicked Fairy	221
The Tree-Elf	223
The Princess who might not see the Sun	226

PART VI

LANDSCAPES

The Woods of Latium	231
A Harvest-Home in Cos	232
The Vale of the Adonis	233
The Home of the Cilician Pirates	235
The Corycian Cave	237
The Baths of Solomon	239
The Petrified Cascades of Hierapolis	242

APPENDIX

List of Extracts	245
----------------------------	-----

ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Æneas finds the Golden Bough</i>	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACE PAGE
The Witches' Sabbath	26
"He soon emerged in the form of a wolf" (The Were-Wolves)	28
"The tree-spirit has been seen to rush out" (Trees tenanted by Spirits)	42
"The witches are caught by the thorns" (Precautions against Witchcraft)	74
"The herds were forcibly driven through the fire" (The Pigs of the Parson's Wife)	110
"To this discourse the bear listens without conviction" (Funeral Oration to the Bear)	140
"An enchanter is employed to lure the fish to their doom" (Fish treated with Respect)	156
"She said, 'What is it, divine Father?'" (Isis and the Sun God)	180
"The serpent father protecting his child" (The Rajahs of Nagpur)	188
"So they mounted the ram and fled with him over land and sea" (King Athamas)	190
"Struck at her with his axe" (The Miller's Wife and the Two Grey Cats)	198

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACE	PAGE
“Tossed the dragon high in air” (The Dragon of the Watermill)		204
“The king stepped out and the fight began” (The Soulless King)		208
“All dancing together on the floor” (The Helpful Animals)		214
“The cloud carried her away” (The Wicked Fairy)		222

PART I

CHRISTMAS AND THE MISTLETOE

THE GOLDEN BOUGH

WHY was the mistletoe called the Golden Bough? The whitish-yellow of the mistletoe berries is hardly enough to account for the name, for Virgil says that the bough was altogether golden, stem as well as leaves. Perhaps the name may be derived from the rich golden yellow which a bough of mistletoe assumes when it has been cut and kept for some months; the bright tint is not confined to the leaves, but spreads to the stalks as well, so that the whole branch appears to be indeed a Golden Bough. Breton peasants hang up great bunches of mistletoe in front of their cottages, and in the month of June these bunches are conspicuous for the bright golden tinge of their foliage. In some parts of Brittany, especially about Morbihan, branches of mistletoe are hung over the doors of stables and byres to protect the horses and cattle, probably against witchcraft.

The yellow colour of the withered bough may partly explain why the mistletoe has been sometimes supposed to possess the property of disclosing treasures in the earth; for there is a natural affinity between a yellow bough and yellow gold. .This

CHRISTMAS AND THE MISTLETOE

suggestion is confirmed by the analogy of the marvellous properties popularly ascribed to the mythical fern-seed or fern-bloom. Fern-seed is popularly supposed to bloom like gold or fire on Midsummer Eve. Thus in Bohemia it is said that "on St. John's Day fern-seed blooms with golden blossoms that gleam like fire." Now it is a property of this mythical fern-seed that whoever has it, or will ascend a mountain holding it in his hand on Midsummer Eve, will discover a vein of gold or will see the treasures of the earth shining with a bluish flame. In Russia they say that if you succeed in catching the wondrous bloom of the fern at midnight on Midsummer Eve, you have only to throw it up into the air and it will fall like a star on the very spot where a treasure lies hidden. In Brittany treasure-seekers gather fern-seed at midnight on Midsummer Eve, and keep it till Palm Sunday of the following year; then they strew the seed on ground where they think a treasure is concealed. Tyrolese peasants imagine that hidden treasures can be seen glowing like flame on Midsummer Eve, and that fern-seed, gathered at this mystic season, with the usual precautions, will help to bring the buried gold to the surface. In the Swiss canton of Freiburg people used to watch beside a fern on St. John's night in the hope of winning a treasure, which the devil himself sometimes brought to them. In Bohemia they say that he who procures the golden bloom of the fern at this season has thereby the key to all hidden treasures; and that if maidens will spread a cloth

THE GOLDEN BOUGH

under the fast-fading bloom, red gold will drop into it. And in the Tyrol and Bohemia, if you place fern-seed among money, the money will never decrease, however much of it you spend. Sometimes the fern-seed is supposed to bloom on Christmas night, and whoever catches it will become very rich. In Styria they say that by gathering fern-seed on Christmas night you can force the devil to bring you a bag of money. In Swabia likewise you can, by taking the proper precautions, compel Satan himself to fetch you a packet of fern-seed on Christmas night. But for four weeks previously, and during the whole of the Advent season, you must be very careful never to pray, never to go to church, and never to use holy water; you must busy yourself all day long with devilish thoughts, and cherish an ardent wish that the devil would help you to get money. Thus prepared you take your stand, between eleven and twelve on Christmas night, at the meeting of two roads, over both of which corpses have been carried to the churchyard. Here many people meet you, some of them dead and buried long ago—it may be your parents or grandparents, or old friends and acquaintances—and they stop and greet you, and ask, “What are you doing here?” And tiny little goblins hop and dance about and try to make you laugh. But if you smile or utter a single word, the devil will tear you to shreds and tatters on the spot. If, however, you stand glum and silent and solemn, there will come, after all the ghostly train has passed by, a man dressed as a hunter, and that is the devil. • He

CHRISTMAS AND THE MISTLETOE

will hand you a paper cornet full of fern-seed, which you must keep and carry about with you as long as you live. It will give you the power of doing as much work at your trade in a day as twenty or thirty ordinary men could do in the same time. So you will grow very rich. But few people have the courage to go through with the ordeal. The people of Rotenburg tell of a weaver of their town, who lived some two hundred and fifty years ago and performed prodigies of weaving by a simple application of fern-seed which he had been so fortunate as to obtain, no doubt from the devil, though that is not expressly alleged by tradition. Rich in the possession of this treasure, the lazy rascal worked only on Saturdays and spent all the rest of the week playing and drinking; yet in one day he wove far more cloth than any other skilled weaver who sat at his loom from morning to night every day of the week. Naturally he kept his own counsel, and nobody might ever have known how he did it if it had not been for what, humanly speaking, you might call an accident, though for my part I cannot but regard it as the manifest finger of Providence. One day—it was the octave of a festival—the fellow had woven a web no less than a hundred ells long, and his mistress resolved to deliver it to her customer the same evening. So she put the cloth in a basket and away she trudged with it. Her way led her past a church, and as she passed the sacred edifice she heard the tinkle of the holy bell which announced the elevation of the Host. Being a good woman she put her basket

THE GOLDEN BOUGH

down, knelt beside it, and there, with the shadows gathering round her, committed herself to the care of God and His good angels, and received, along with the kneeling congregation in the lighted church, the evening benediction, which kept her and them from all the perils and dangers of the night. Then, rising refreshed, she took up her basket. But what was her astonishment on looking into it to find the whole web reduced to a heap of yarn! The blessed words of the priest at the altar had undone the cursed spell of the Enemy of Mankind.

Thus, on the principle of like by like, fern-seed is supposed to discover gold because it is itself golden; and for a similar reason it enriches its possessor with an unfailing supply of gold. But while the fern-seed is described as golden, it is equally described as glowing and fiery. Hence, when we consider that two great days for gathering the fabulous seed are Midsummer Eve and Christmas—that is, the two solstices (for Christmas is nothing but an old heathen celebration of the winter solstice)—we are led to regard the fiery aspect of the fern-seed as primary, and its golden aspect as secondary and derivative. Fern-seed, in fact, would seem to be an emanation of the sun's fire at the two turning-points of its course, the summer and winter solstices. This view is confirmed by a German story, in which a hunter is said to have procured fern-seed by shooting at the sun on Midsummer Day at noon; three drops of blood fell down, which he caught in a white cloth, and these blood-drops

CHRISTMAS AND THE MISTLETOE

were the fern-seed. Here the blood is clearly the blood of the sun, from which the fern-seed is thus directly derived. Thus it may be taken as probable that fern-seed is golden, because it is believed to be an emanation of the sun's golden fire.

Now, like fern-seed, the mistletoe is gathered either at Midsummer or Christmas—that is, either at the summer or the winter solstice—and, like fern-seed, it is supposed to possess the power of revealing treasures in the earth. On Midsummer Eve people in Sweden make divining-rods of mistletoe, or of four different kinds of wood, one of which must be mistletoe. The treasure-seeker places the rod on the ground after sundown, and when it rests directly over treasure, the rod begins to move as if it were alive. Now, if the mistletoe discovers gold, it must be in its character of the Golden Bough; and if it is gathered at the solstices, must not the Golden Bough, like the golden fern-seed, be an emanation of the sun's fire? The question cannot be answered with a simple affirmative. The old Aryans perhaps kindled the solstitial and other ceremonial fires in part as sun-charms, that is, with the intention of supplying the sun with fresh fire; and as these fires were usually made by the friction or combustion of oak-wood, it may have appeared to the ancient Aryan that the sun was periodically recruited from the fire which resided in the sacred oak. In other words, the oak may have seemed to him the original storehouse or reservoir of the fire which was from time to time drawn out to feed the sun. But if the life of the oak was conceived to be

THE GOLDEN BOUGH

in the mistletoe, the mistletoe must on that view have contained the seed or germ of the fire which was elicited by friction from the wood of the oak. Thus, instead of saying that the mistletoe was an emanation of the sun's fire, it might be more correct to say that the sun's fire was regarded as an emanation of the mistletoe. No wonder, then, that the mistletoe shone with a golden splendour, and was called the Golden Bough. Probably, however, like fern-seed, it was thought to assume its golden aspect only at those stated times, especially midsummer, when fire was drawn from the oak to light up the sun. At Pulverbatch, in Shropshire, it was believed within living memory that the oak-tree blooms on Midsummer Eve and the blossom withers before daylight. A maiden who wishes to know her lot in marriage should spread a white cloth under the tree at night, and in the morning she will find a little dust, which is all that remains of the flower. She should place the pinch of dust under her pillow, and then her future husband will appear to her in her dreams. This fleeting bloom of the oak, if I am right, was probably the mistletoe in its character of the Golden Bough. The conjecture is confirmed by the observation that in Wales a real sprig of mistletoe gathered on Midsummer Eve is similarly placed under the pillow to induce prophetic dreams; and further, the mode of catching the imaginary bloom of the oak in a white cloth is exactly that which was employed by the Druids to catch the real mistletoe when it dropped from the bough of the oak, severed by the golden sickle. As

CHRISTMAS AND THE MISTLETOE

Shropshire borders on Wales, the belief that the oak blooms on Midsummer Eve may be Welsh in its immediate origin, though probably the belief is a fragment of the primitive Aryan creed. In some parts of Italy peasants still go out on Midsummer morning to search the oak-trees for the "oil of St. John," which, like the mistletoe, heals all wounds, and is, perhaps, the mistletoe itself in its glorified aspect. Thus it is easy to understand how a title like the Golden Bough, so little descriptive of its usual appearance on the tree, should have been applied to the seemingly insignificant parasite. Further, we can perhaps see why in antiquity mistletoe was believed to possess the remarkable property of extinguishing fire, and why in Sweden it is still kept in houses as a safeguard against conflagration. Its fiery nature marks it out as the best possible cure or preventive of injury by fire.

These considerations may partially explain why Virgil makes Aeneas carry a glorified bough of mistletoe with him on his descent into the gloomy subterranean world. The poet describes how at the very gates of hell there stretched a vast and gloomy wood, and how the hero, following the flight of two doves that lured him on, wandered into the depths of the immemorial forest till he saw afar off through the shadows of the trees the flickering light of the Golden Bough illuminating the matted boughs overhead. If the mistletoe, as a yellow withered bough in the sad autumn woods, was conceived to contain the seed of fire, what better companion could a forlorn wanderer in the nether shades take

THE GOLDEN BOUGH

with him than a bough that would be a lamp to his feet as well as a rod and staff to his hands? Armed with it he might boldly confront the dreadful spectres that would cross his path on his adventurous journey. Hence when Aeneas, emerging from the forest, comes to the banks of Styx, winding slow with sluggish stream through the infernal marsh, and the surly ferryman refuses him passage in his boat, he has but to draw the Golden Bough from his bosom and hold it up, and straightway the blusterer quails at the sight and meekly receives the hero into his crazy bark, which sinks deep in the water under the unusual weight of the living man. Even in recent times mistletoe has been deemed a protection against witches and trolls, and the ancients may well have credited it with the same magical virtue. And if the parasite can, as some of our peasants believe, open all locks, why should it not have served as an "open Sesame" in the hands of Aeneas to unlock the gates of death? There is some reason to suppose that when Orpheus in like manner descended alive to hell to rescue the soul of his dead wife Eurydice from the shades, he carried with him a willow bough to serve as a passport on his journey to and from the land of the dead; for in the great frescoes representing the nether world, with which the master hand of Polygnotus adorned the walls of a loggia at Delphi, Orpheus was depicted sitting pensively under a willow, holding his lyre, now silent and useless, in his left hand, while with his right he grasped the drooping boughs of the tree. If the willow in the

CHRISTMAS AND THE MISTLETOE

picture had indeed the significance which an ingenious scholar has attributed to it, the painter meant to represent the dead musician dreaming wistfully of the time when the willow had carried him safe back across the Stygian ferry to that bright world of love and music which he was now to see no more.

THE MISTLETOE AS LIGHTNING-CONDUCTOR, AS MASTER-KEY, AS PROTECTION AGAINST SORCERY

The ancient Italian opinion that mistletoe extinguishes fire appears to be shared by Swedish peasants, who hang up bunches of oak-mistletoe on the ceilings of their rooms as a protection against harm in general and conflagration in particular. A hint as to the way in which mistletoe comes to be possessed of this property is furnished by the epithet "thunder-besom," which people of the Aargau canton in Switzerland apply to the plant. For a thunder-besom is a shaggy, bushy excrescence on branches of trees, which is popularly believed to be produced by a flash of lightning; hence in Bohemia a thunder-besom burnt in the fire protects the house against being struck by a thunderbolt. Being itself a product of lightning, it naturally serves as a protection against lightning, in fact as a kind of lightning-conductor. Hence the fire which mistletoe in Sweden is designed especially to avert from houses may be fire kindled by lightning,

THE HAYS OF ERROL

though no doubt the plant is equally effective against conflagration in general.

Again, mistletoe acts as a master-key as well as lightning-conductor, for it is said to open all locks. But perhaps the most precious of all the virtues of mistletoe is that it affords efficient protection against sorcery and witchcraft. That, no doubt, is the reason why in Austria a twig of mistletoe is laid on the threshold as a preventive of nightmare; and it may be the reason why in the north of England they say that if you wish your dairy to thrive you should give your bunch of mistletoe to the first cow that has a calf after New Year's Day, for it is well known that nothing is so fatal to milk and butter as witchcraft. In rural districts of Wales, where mistletoe abounded, there was always a profusion of it in the farmhouses. When mistletoe was scarce, Welsh farmers used to say, "No mistletoe, no luck"; but if there was a fine crop of mistletoe, they expected a fine crop of corn. In Sweden mistletoe is diligently sought after on St. John's Eve, the people "believing it to be, in a high degree, possessed of mystic qualities; and that if a sprig of it be attached to the ceiling of the dwelling-house, the horse's stall, or the cow's crib, the warlock will then be powerless to injure either man or beast."

THE HAYS OF ERROL

Tradition ran that the fate of the Hays of Errol, an estate in Perthshire near the Firth of Tay, was

CHRISTMAS AND THE MISTLETOE

bound up with the mistletoe that grew on a certain great oak. A member of the Hay family has recorded the old belief as follows: "Among the low country families the badges are now almost generally forgotten; but it appears, by an ancient MS. and the tradition of a few old people in Perthshire, that the badge of the Hays was the mistletoe. There was formerly in the neighbourhood of Errol, and not far from the Falcon stone, a vast oak of an unknown age, and upon which grew a profusion of the plant: many charms and legends were considered to be connected with the tree, and the duration of the family of Hay was said to be united with its existence. It was believed that a sprig of the mistletoe cut by a Hay on Allhallowmas Eve with a new dirk, and after surrounding the tree three times sunwise and pronouncing a certain spell, was a sure charm against all glamour or witchery, and an infallible guard in the day of battle. A spray gathered in the same manner was placed in the cradle of infants, and thought to defend them from being changed for elf-bairns by the fairies. Finally, it was affirmed that when the root of the oak had perished, 'the grass should grow in the hearth of Errol, and a raven should sit in the falcon's nest.' The two most unlucky deeds which could be done by one of the name of Hay was to kill a white falcon and to cut down a limb from the oak of Errol. When the old tree was destroyed I could never learn. The estate has been some time sold out of the family of Hay, and of course it is said that the fatal oak was cut down a short time

THE CATTLE'S CONVERSATION

before." The old superstition is recorded in verses which are traditionally ascribed to Thomas the Rhymer:

While the mistletoe bats on Errol's aik,
And that aik stands fast,
The Hays shall flourish, and their good grey hawk
Shall nocht flinch before the blast.

But when the root of the aik decays,
And the mistletoe dwines on its withered breast,
The grass shall grow on Errol's hearthstane,
And the corbie roup in the falcon's nest.

THE CATTLE'S CONVERSATION ON CHRISTMAS EVE

In the Vosges Mountains, as indeed in many other places, cattle acquired the gift of speech on Christmas Eve, and conversed with each other in the language of Christians. Their conversation was, indeed, most instructive; for the future, it seems, had no secret worth mentioning for them. Yet few people cared to be caught eavesdropping at the byre; wise folk contented themselves with setting a good store of fodder in the manger, then shut the door, and left the animals to their ruminations. A farmer once hid in a corner of the byre to overhear the edifying talk of the beasts. But it did him little good, for one ox said to another ox, "What shall we do to-morrow?" and the other replied, "We shall carry our master to the church-yard." Sure enough the farmer died that very night and was buried next morning.

CHRISTMAS AND THE MISTLETOE

THE YULE LOG IN SERVIA

Nowhere, apparently, in Europe is the old heathen ritual of the Yule log preserved to the present day more perfectly than in Servia. At early dawn on Christmas Eve every peasant house sends two of its strongest young men to the nearest forest to cut down a young oak-tree and bring it home. There, after offering up a short prayer or crossing themselves thrice, they throw a handful of wheat on the chosen oak and greet it with the words, "Happy Christmas to you!" Then they cut it down, taking care that it shall fall towards the east at the moment when the sun's orb appears over the rim of the eastern horizon. Should the tree fall towards the west, it would be the worst possible omen for the house and its inmates in the ensuing year; and it is also an evil omen if the tree should be caught and stopped in its fall by another tree. It is important to keep and carry home the first chip from the fallen oak. The trunk is sawn into two or three logs, one of them rather longer than the others. A flat, unleavened cake of the purest wheaten flour is brought out of the house and broken on the larger of the logs by a woman. The logs are left for the present to stand outside, leaning on one of the walls of the house. Each of them is called a Yule log.

Meanwhile the children and young people go from house to house singing special songs called *Colleda*, because of an old pagan divinity Colleda,

THE YULE LOG IN SERVIA

who is invoked in every line. In one of them she is spoken of as "a beautiful little maid"; in another she is implored to make the cows yield milk abundantly. The day is spent in busy preparations. The women bake little cakes of a special sort in the shape of lambs, pigs, and chickens; the men make ready a pig for roasting, for in every Servian house roast pig is the principal dish at Christmas. A bundle of straw, tied with a rope, is brought into the courtyard and left to stand there near the Yule logs.

At the moment when the sun is setting all the members of the family assemble in the central hall (the great family kitchen) of the principal house. The mother of the family or the wife of the chief gives a pair of woollen gloves to one of the young men, who goes out and presently returns carrying in his gloved hands the largest of the logs. The mother receives him at the threshold, throwing at him a handful of wheat, in which the first chip of the oak-tree cut in the early morning for the Yule log has been kept all day. Entering the central hall with the Yule log, the young man greets all present with the words, "Good evening, and may you have a happy Christmas!" and they all answer in chorus, "May God and the happy and holy Christmas help thee!" In some parts of Servia the chief of the family, holding a glass of red wine in his hand, greets the Yule log as if it were a living person, and drinks to its health. After that, another glass of red wine is poured on the log. Then the oldest male member of the family, assisted

CHRISTMAS AND THE MISTLETOE

by the young man who brought in the log, places it on the burning fire so that the thicker end of the log protrudes for about a foot from the hearth. In some places this end is smeared with honey.

Next the mother of the family brings in the bundle of straw which was left standing outside. All the young children arrange themselves behind her in a row. She then walks slowly round the hall and the adjoining rooms, throwing handfuls of straw on the floor and imitating the cackling of a hen, while all the children follow her, peeping with their lips as if they were chickens cheeping and waddling after the mother bird. When the floor is well strewn with straw, the father or the eldest member of the family throws a few walnuts in every corner of the hall. A large pot, or a small wooden box, filled with wheat is placed high in the east corner of the hall, and a tall candle of yellow wax is stuck in the middle of the wheat. Then the father of the family reverently lights the candle and prays God to bless the family with health and happiness, the fields with a good harvest, the beehives with plenty of honey, the cattle and sheep with young, and the cows with abundant milk and rich cream. After that they all sit down to supper, squatting on the floor, for the use of chairs and tables is forbidden on this occasion.

By four o'clock next morning (Christmas Day) the whole village is astir; indeed most people do not sleep at all that night. It is deemed most important to keep the Yule log burning brightly all night long. Very early, too, the pig is laid on the

THE YULE LOG IN SERVIA

fire to roast, and at the same moment one of the family goes out into the yard and fires a pistol or gun; and when the roast pig is removed from the fire the shot is repeated. Hence for several hours in the early morning of Christmas Day such a popping and banging of firearms goes on that a stranger might think a stubborn skirmish was in progress. Just before the sun rises, a girl goes and draws water at the village spring or at the brook. Before she fills her vessels, she wishes the water a happy Christmas and throws a handful of wheat into it. The first cupfuls of water she brings home are used to bake a special Christmas cake, of which all the members partake at dinner, and portions are kept for absent relatives. A small silver coin is baked in the cake, and he or she who gets it will be lucky during the year.

All the family gathered round the blazing Yule log now anxiously expect the arrival of the special Christmas visitor, who bears the title of *polaznik*. He is usually a young boy of a friendly family. No other person, not even the priest or the mayor of the village, would be allowed to set foot in the house before the arrival of this important personage. Therefore he ought to come, and generally does come, very early in the morning. He carries a woollen glove full of wheat, and when the door is opened at his knock he throws handfuls of wheat on the family gathered round the hearth, greeting them with the words, "Christ is born!" They all answer, "He is born indeed," and the hostess flings a handful of wheat over the Christmas visitor, who,

CHRISTMAS AND THE MISTLETOE

moreover, casts some of his wheat into the corners of the hall as well as upon the people. Then he walks straight to the hearth, takes a shovel, and strikes the burning log so that a cloud of sparks flies up the chimney, while he says, "May you have this year so many oxen, so many horses, so many sheep, so many pigs, so many beehives full of honey, so much good luck, prosperity, progress, and happiness!" Having uttered these good wishes, he embraces and kisses his host. Then he turns again to the hearth, falls on his knees, and kisses the projecting part of the Yule log. On rising to his feet he places a coin on the log as his gift. Meanwhile a low wooden chair has been brought in by a woman, and the visitor is led to it to take his seat. But just as he is about to do so, the chair is jerked away from under him by a male member of the family, and he measures his length on the floor. By this fall he is supposed to fix into the ground all the good wishes which he has uttered that morning. The hostess thereupon wraps him in a thick blanket, and he sits quietly muffled in it for a few minutes; the thick blanket in which he is swathed is believed to ensure that the cows will give thick cream the next year. While he sits thus enriching the milk of the dairy, the lads who are to herd the sheep in the coming year go to the hearth, and, kneeling down before it, kiss each other across the projecting end of the Yule log. By this demonstration of affection they are thought to seal the love of the ewes for their lambs.

PART II

UNCANNY BEINGS

THE OMNIPRESENCE OF DEMONS

BRED in a philosophy which strips nature of personality and reduces it to the unknown cause of an orderly series of impressions on our senses, we find it hard to put ourselves in the place of the savage, to whom the same impressions appear in the guise of spirits or the handiwork of spirits. For ages the army of spirits, once so near, has been receding farther and farther from us, banished by the magic wand of science from hearth and home, from ruined cell and ivied tower, from haunted glade and lonely mere, from the riven murky cloud that belches forth the lightning, and from those fairer clouds that pillow the silver moon or fret with flakes of burning red the golden eve. The spirits are gone even from their last stronghold in the sky, whose blue arch no longer passes for the screen that hides from mortal eyes the glories of the celestial world. Only in poets' dreams or impassioned flights of oratory is it given to catch a glimpse of the last flutter of the standards of the retreating host, to hear the beat of their invisible wings, the sound of their mocking laughter, or the swell of angel music dying away in the distance. Far otherwise is it

UNCANNY BEINGS

with the savage. To his imagination the world still teems with those motley beings whom a more sober philosophy has discarded. Fairies and goblins, ghosts and demons, still hover about him both waking and sleeping. They dog his footsteps, dazzle his senses, enter into him, harass and deceive and torment him in a thousand freakish and mischievous ways. The mishaps that befall him, the losses he sustains, the pains he has to endure, he commonly sets down, if not to the magic of his enemies, to the spite or anger or caprice of the spirits. Their constant presence wearies him, their sleepless malignity exasperates him; he longs with an unspeakable longing to be rid of them altogether, and from time to time, driven to bay, his patience utterly exhausted, he turns fiercely on his persecutors and makes a desperate effort to chase the whole pack of them from the land, to clear the air of their swarming multitudes, that he may breathe more freely and go on his way unmolested, at least for a time. Thus it comes about that the endeavour of primitive people to make a clean sweep of all their troubles generally takes the form of a grand hunting out and expulsion of devils or ghosts. They think that if they can only shake off these their accursed tormentors, they will make a fresh start in life, happy and innocent; the tales of Eden and the old poetic golden age will come true again.

THE DEMONS OF ABBOT RICHALM

THE DEMONS OF ABBOT RICHALM

No Esquimau on the frozen shores of Labrador, no Indian in the sweltering forests of Guiana, no cowering Hindoo in the jungles of Bengal could well have a more constant and abiding sense of the presence of malignant demons everywhere about him than had Abbot Richalm, who ruled over the Cistercian monastery of Schönthal in the first half of the thirteenth century. In the curious work to which he gave the name of *Revelations*, he set forth how he was daily and hourly infested by devils, whom, though he could not see, he heard, and to whom he imputed all the ailments of his flesh and all the frailties of his spirit. If he felt squeamish, he was sure that the feeling was wrought in him by demoniacal agency. If puckers appeared on his nose, if his lower lip drooped, the devils had again to answer for it; a cough, a cold in the head, a hawking and spitting, could have none but a supernatural and devilish origin. If, pacing in his orchard on a sunny autumn morning, the portly abbot stooped to pick up the mellow fruit that had fallen in the night, the blood that mounted to his purple face was sent coursing thither by his invisible foes. If the abbot tossed on his sleepless couch, while the moonlight, streaming in at the window, cast the shadows of the stanchions like black bars on the floor of his cell, it was not the fleas and so forth that kept him awake—oh no! “Vermin,” said he sagely, “do not really bite”;

UNCANNY BEINGS

they seem to bite indeed, but it is all the work of devils. If a monk snored in the dormitory, the unseemly noise proceeded not from him but from a demon lurking in his person. Holding such views on the source of all bodily and mental indisposition, it was natural enough that the abbot should prescribe remedies which are not to be found in the pharmacopoeia, and which would be asked for in vain at an apothecary's. They consisted chiefly of holy water and the sign of the cross; this last he recommended particularly as a specific for flea-bites.

THE WITCHES' SABBATH

It was especially on the Eve of May Day, St. Thomas's Day, St. John's Day, and Christmas Eve, as well as on Mondays, that the witches were dreaded. Then they would come into a neighbour's house to beg, borrow, or steal something, no matter what; but woe to the poor wretch who suffered them to carry away so much as a chip or splinter of wood, for they would certainly use it to his undoing. On these witching nights the witches rode to their Sabbath on baking-forks and the dashers of churns; but if when they were hurtling through the darkness any one standing below addressed one of the witches by name, she would die within the year. To counteract and undo the spells which witches cast on man and beast, people resorted to all kinds of measures. Thus on the



The Witches' Sabbath

THE WITCHES' SABBATH

before-mentioned days folk made three crosses on the doors of the byres or guarded them by hanging up St. John's wort, marjoram, or other equally powerful talismans. Very often, too, the village youth would carry the war into the enemy's quarters by marching out in a body, cracking whips, firing guns, waving burning besoms, shouting and making an uproar, all for the purpose of frightening and driving away the witches. In Prussia witches and warlocks used regularly to assemble twice a year. The places where they held their Sabbath were various. They generally rode on a baking-fork, but often on a black, three-legged horse, and they took their departure up the chimney with the words, "Up and away and nowhere to stop!" When they were all gathered on the Mount of the Witches, they held high revelry, feasting first, and then dancing on a tight rope, lefthanded-wise, to the inspiring strains which an old warlock drew from a drum and a pig's head. The South Slavs believe that on the night of Midsummer Eve a witch will slink up to the fence of the farmyard and say, "The cheese to me, the lard to me, the butter to me, the milk to me, but the cowhide to thee!" After that the cow will perish miserably, and you will be obliged to bury the flesh and sell the hide. To prevent this disaster, the thing to do is to go out into the meadows very early on Midsummer morning while the dew is on the grass, collect a quantity of dew in a waterproof mantle, carry it home, and having tethered your cow, wash her down with the dew. After that you have only to milk away as

UNCANNY BEINGS

hard as you can; the amount of milk that you will extract from that cow is quite surprising.

THE WERE-WOLVES

It is commonly supposed that certain men and women can transform themselves by magic art into wolves or other animals, but that any wound inflicted on such a transformed beast (a were-wolf or other were-animal) is simultaneously inflicted on the human body of the witch or warlock who had transformed herself or himself into the creature. This belief is widely diffused; it meets us in Europe, Asia, and Africa. For example, Olaus Magnus tells us that in Livonia, not many years before he wrote, a noble lady had a dispute with her slave on the subject of were-wolves, she doubting whether there were any such things, and he maintaining that there were. To convince her he retired to a room, from which he soon appeared in the form of a wolf. Being chased by the dogs into the forest and brought to bay, the wolf defended himself fiercely, but lost an eye in the struggle. Next day the slave returned to his mistress in human form, but with only one eye. Again, it happened in the year 1588 that a gentleman in a village among the mountains of Auvergne, looking out of the window one evening, saw a friend of his going out to hunt. He begged him to bring him back some of his bag, and his friend said that he would. Well, he had not gone very far before he met a huge



*"He soon emerged in the form
of a wolf"*
THE WERE-WOLVES.

THE WERE-WOLVES

wolf. He fired and missed it, and the animal attacked him furiously, but he stood on his guard and with an adroit stroke of his hunting-knife he cut off the right fore-paw of the brute, which thereupon fled away and he saw it no more. He returned to his friend, and drawing from his pouch the severed paw of the wolf, he found to his horror that it was turned into a woman's hand with a golden ring on one of the fingers. His friend recognized the ring as that of his own wife, and went to find her. She was sitting by the fire with her right arm under her apron. As she refused to draw it out, her husband confronted her with the hand and the ring on it. She at once confessed the truth, that it was she in the form of a were-wolf whom the hunter had wounded. Her confession was confirmed by applying the severed hand to the stump of her arm, for the two fitted exactly. The angry husband delivered up his wicked wife to justice; she was tried and burnt as a witch. It is said that a were-wolf, scouring the streets of Padua, was caught, and when they cut off his four paws he at once turned into a man, but with both his hands and feet amputated. Again, in a farm of the French district of Beauce, there was once a herdsman who never slept at home. These nocturnal absences naturally attracted attention and set people talking. At the same time, by a curious coincidence, a wolf used to prowl round the farm every night, and to excite the dogs in the farmyard to fury by thrusting his snout derisively through the cat's hole in the great gate. The farmer had his suspicions and he

UNCANNY BEINGS

determined to watch. One night, when the herdsman went out as usual, his master followed him quietly till he came to a hut, where with his own eyes he saw the man put on a broad belt and at once turn into a wolf, which scoured away over the fields. The farmer smiled a sickly sort of smile and went back to the farm. There he took a stout stick and sat down at the cat's hole to wait. He had not long to wait. The dogs barked like mad, a wolf's snout showed through the hole, down came the stick, out gushed the blood, and a voice was heard to say without the gate, "A good job too. I had still three years to run." Next day the herdsman appeared as usual, but he had a scar on his brow, and he never went out again at night. 32588

In China also the faith in similar transformation is reflected in the following tale. A certain man in Sungyang went into the mountains to gather fuel. Night fell and he was pursued by two tigers, but scrambled up a tree out of their reach. Then said the one tiger to the other tiger, "If we can find Chu-Tu-shi, we are sure to catch this man up the tree." So off went one of them to find Chu-Tu-shi, while the other kept watch at the foot of the tree. Soon after that another tiger, leaner and longer than the other two, appeared on the scene and made a grab at the man's coat. But fortunately the moon was shining, the man saw the paw, and with a stroke of his axe cut off one of its claws. The tigers roared and fled, one after the other, so the man climbed down the tree and went home. When he told his tale in the village, suspicion naturally fell

THE WERE-WOLVES

on the said Chu-Tu-shi, and next day some men went to see him in his house. They were told that they could not see him, for he had been out the night before and had hurt his hand, and he was now ill in bed. So they put two and two together and reported him to the police. The police arrived, surrounded the house, and set fire to it; but Chu-Tu-shi rose from his bed, turned into a tiger, charged right through the police, and escaped, and to this day nobody ever knew where he went to.

The Toradjas of Central Celebes stand in very great fear of were-wolves, that is, of men and women who have the power of transforming their spirits into animals such as cats, crocodiles, wild pigs, apes, deer, and buffaloes, which roam about battenning on human flesh, and especially on human livers, while the men and women in their own proper human form are sleeping quietly in their beds at home. Among them a man is either born a were-wolf or becomes one by infection; for mere contact with a were-wolf, or even with anything that has been touched by his spittle, is quite enough to turn the most innocent person into a were-wolf; nay, even to lean your head against anything against which a were-wolf has leaned his head suffices to do it. The penalty for being a were-wolf is death; but the sentence is never passed until the accused has had a fair trial and his guilt has been clearly demonstrated by an ordeal, which consists in dipping the middle finger into boiling resin. If the finger is not burnt, the man is no were-wolf; but if it is burnt, a were-wolf he most

UNCANNY BEINGS

assuredly is, so they take him away to a quiet spot and hack him to bits. In cutting him up the executioners are naturally very careful not to be bespattered with his blood, for if that were to happen they would of course be turned into were-wolves themselves. Further, they place his severed head beside his hind-quarters to prevent his soul from coming to life again and pursuing his depredations. So great is the horror of were-wolves among the Toradjas, and so great is their fear of contracting the deadly taint by infection, that many persons have assured a missionary that they would not spare their own child if they knew him to be a were-wolf. Now these people, whose faith in were-wolves is not a mere dying or dead superstition but a living, dreadful conviction, tell stories of were-wolves which conform to the type which we are examining. They say that once upon a time a were-wolf came in human shape under the house of a neighbour while his real body lay asleep as usual at home, and calling out softly to the man's wife, asked her to meet him in the tobacco-field next day. But the husband was lying awake and he heard it all, but he said nothing to anybody. Next day chanced to be a busy one in the village, for a roof had to be put on a new house and all the men were lending a hand with the work, and among them, to be sure, was the were-wolf himself, I mean to say his own human self; there he was up on the roof working away as hard as anybody. But the woman went out to the tobacco-field, and behind went unseen her husband, slinking through the under-

THE WERE-WOLVES

wood. When they were come to the field, he saw the were-wolf come up to his wife, so out he rushed and struck at him with a stick. Quick as thought, the were-wolf turned himself into a leaf, but the man was as nimble, for he caught up the leaf, thrust it into the joint of bamboo, in which he kept his tobacco, and bunged it up tight. Then he walked back with his wife to the village, carrying the bamboo with the were-wolf in it. When they came to the village, the human body of the were-wolf was still on the roof, working away with the rest. The man put the bamboo in a fire. At that the human were-wolf looked down from the roof and said, "Don't do that." The man drew the bamboo from the fire, but a moment afterwards he put it in the fire again, and again the human were-wolf on the roof looked down and cried, "Don't do that." But this time the man kept the bamboo in the fire, and when it blazed up, down fell the human were-wolf from the roof as dead as a stone. Again, the following story went round among the Toradjas not so very many years ago. The thing happened at Soemara, on the Gulf of Tomori. It was evening and some men sat chatting with a certain Hadji Mohammad. When it had grown dark, one of the men went out of the house for something or other. A little while afterwards one of the company thought he saw a stag's antlers standing out sharp and clear against the bright evening sky. So Hadji Mohammad raised his gun and fired. A minute or two afterwards back comes the man who had gone out, and says he to Hadji Mohammad,

UNCANNY BEINGS

“ You shot at me and hit me. You must pay me a fine.” They searched him but found no wound on him anywhere. Then they knew that he was a were-wolf who had turned himself into a stag and had healed the bullet-wound by licking it. However, the bullet had found its billet, for two days afterwards he was a dead man.

An old Roman tale is told by Petronius. It is put in the mouth of one Niceros. Late at night he left the town to visit a friend of his, a widow, who lived at a farm five miles down the road. He was accompanied by a soldier, who lodged in the same house, a man of Herculean build. When they set out it was near dawn, but the moon shone as bright as day. Passing through the outskirts of the town, they came amongst the tombs, which lined the highroad for some distance. There the soldier made an excuse for retiring behind a monument, and Niceros sat down to wait for him, humming a tune and counting the tombstones to pass the time. In a little he looked round for his companion, and saw a sight which froze him with horror. The soldier had stripped off his clothes to the last rag and laid them at the side of the highway. Then he performed a certain ceremony over them, and immediately was changed into a wolf, and ran howling into the forest. When Niceros had recovered himself a little, he went to pick up the clothes, but found that they were turned to stone. More dead than alive, he drew his sword, and, striking at every shadow cast by the tombstones on the moonlit road, he tottered to his friend’s house. He entered it like

THE EXTERNAL SOUL

a ghost, to the surprise of the widow, who wondered to see him abroad so late. "If you had only been here a little ago," said she, "you might have been of some use. For a wolf came tearing into the yard, scaring the cattle and bleeding them like a butcher. But he did not get off so easily, for the servant speared him in the neck." After hearing these words, Niceros felt that he could not close an eye, so he hurried away home again. It was now broad daylight, but when he came to the place where the clothes had been turned to stone, he found only a pool of blood. He reached home, and there lay the soldier in bed like an ox in the shambles, and the doctor was bandaging his neck. "Then I knew," said Niceros, "that the man was a were-wolf, and never again could I break bread with him, no, not if you had killed me for it."

THE EXTERNAL SOUL

Among the Ekoi of the Oban district, in Southern Nigeria, it is usual to hear a person say of another that he or she "possesses" such and such an animal, meaning that the person has the power to assume the shape of that particular creature. It is their belief that by constant practice and by virtue of certain hereditary secrets a man can quit his human body and put on that of a wild beast. They say that in addition to the soul which animates his human body everybody has a bush soul which at times he can send forth to animate the body of the

UNCANNY BEINGS

creature which he "possesses." When he wishes his bush soul to go out on its rambles, he drinks a magic potion, the secret of which has been handed down from time immemorial, and some of which is always kept ready for use in an ancient earthen pot set apart for the purpose. No sooner has he drunk the mystic draught than his bush soul escapes from him and floats away invisible through the town into the forest. There it begins to swell and, safe in the shadow of the trees, takes on the shape of the man's animal double, it may be an elephant, a leopard, a buffalo, a wild boar, or a crocodile. Naturally the potion differs according to the kind of animal into which a man is temporarily converted. It would be absurd, for example, to expect that the dose which turns you into an elephant should also be able to turn you into a crocodile; the thing is manifestly impossible. A great advantage of these temporary conversions of a man into a beast is that it enables the convert in his animal shape to pay out his enemy without being suspected. If, for example, you have a grudge at a man who is a well-to-do farmer, all that you have to do is to turn yourself by night into a buffalo, an elephant, or a wild boar, and then, bursting into his fields, stamp about in them till you have laid the standing crops level with the ground. That is why in the neighbourhood of large well-tilled farms, people prefer to keep their bush souls in buffaloes, elephants, and wild boars, because these animals are the most convenient means of destroying a neighbour's crops. Whereas where the farms are small and ill-kept, as they are round about Oban,

THE EXTERNAL SOUL

it is hardly worth a man's while to take the trouble of turning into a buffalo or an elephant for the paltry satisfaction of rooting up a few miserable yams or such like trash. So the Oban people keep their bush souls in leopards and crocodiles, which, though of little use for the purpose of destroying a neighbour's crops, are excellent for the purpose of killing the man himself first and eating him afterwards. But the power of turning into an animal has this serious disadvantage that it lays you open to the chance of being wounded or even slain in your animal skin before you have time to put it off and scramble back into your human integument. A remarkable case of this sort happened only a few miles from Oban not long ago. To understand it you must know that the chiefs of the Ododop tribe, who live about ten miles from Oban, keep their bush souls, whenever they are out on a ramble, in the shape of buffaloes. Well, one day the District Commissioner at Oban saw a buffalo come down to drink at a stream which runs through his garden. He shot at the beast and hit it, and it ran away badly wounded. At the very same moment the head chief of the Ododop tribe, ten miles away, clapped his hand to his side and said, "They have killed me at Oban." Death was not instantaneous, for the buffalo lingered in pain for a couple of days in the forest, but an hour or two before its dead body was discovered by the trackers the chief expired. Just before he died, with touching solicitude he sent a message warning all people who kept their external souls in buffaloes to profit by his sad

UNCANNY BEINGS

fate and beware of going near Oban, which was not a safe place for them. Naturally, when a man keeps his external soul from time to time in a beast, say in a wild cow, he is not so foolish as to shoot an animal of that particular sort, for in so doing he might perhaps be killing himself. But he may kill animals in which other people keep their external souls. For example, a wild cow man may freely shoot an antelope or a wild boar; but should he do so and then have reason to suspect that the dead beast is the animal double of somebody with whom he is on friendly terms, he must perform certain ceremonies over the carcase and then hurry home, running at the top of his speed, to administer a particular medicine to the man whom he has unintentionally injured. In this way he may possibly be in time to save the life of his friend from the effects of the deplorable accident.

THE *USTRELS*

In Bulgaria the herds suffer much from the raids of certain blood-sucking vampires called *Ustrels*. An *Ustrel* is the spirit of a Christian child who was born on a Saturday and died unfortunately before he could be baptized. On the ninth day after burial he grubs his way out of the grave and attacks the cattle at once, sucking their blood all night and returning at peep of dawn to the grave to rest from his labours. In ten days or so the copious draughts of blood which he has swallowed have so fortified

THE *USTRELS*

his constitution that he can undertake longer journeys; so when he falls in with great herds of cattle or flocks of sheep he returns no more to the grave for rest and refreshment at night, but takes up his quarters during the day either between the horns of a sturdy calf or ram or between the hind legs of a milch-cow. Beasts whose blood he has sucked die the same night. In any herd that he may fasten on he begins with the fattest animal and works his way down steadily through the leaner kine till not one single beast is left alive. The carcases of the victims swell up, and when the hide is stripped off you can always perceive the livid patch of flesh where the monster sucked the blood of the poor creature. In a single night he may, by working hard, kill five cows; but he seldom exceeds that number. He can change his shape and weight very easily; for example, when he is sitting by day between the horns of a ram, the animal scarcely feels his weight, but at night he will sometimes throw himself on an ox or a cow so heavily that the animal cannot stir, and lows so pitifully that it would make your heart bleed to hear. People who were born on a Saturday can see these monsters, and they have described them accurately, so that there can be no doubt whatever about their existence. It is, therefore, a matter of great importance to the peasant to protect his flocks and herds against the ravages of such dangerous vampires. The way in which he does so is this. On a Saturday morning before sunrise the village drummer gives the signal to put out every fire in the village; even smoking

UNCANNY BEINGS

is forbidden. Next all the domestic animals, with the exception of fowls, geese, and ducks, are driven out into the open. In front of the flocks and herds march two men, whose names during the ceremony may not be mentioned in the village. They go into the wood, pick two dry branches, and having stripped themselves of their clothes, they rub the two branches together very hard till they catch fire; then with the fire so obtained they kindle two bonfires, one on each side of a cross-road which is known to be frequented by wolves. After that the herd is driven between the two fires. Coals from the bonfires are then taken back to the village and used to rekindle the fires on the domestic hearths. For several days no one may go near the charred and blackened remains of the bonfires at the cross-road. The reason is that the vampire is lying there, having dropped from his seat between the cow's horns when the animals were driven between the two fires. So if any one were to pass by the spot during these days, the monster would be sure to call him by name and to follow him to the village; whereas if he is left alone, a wolf will come at midnight and strangle him, and in a few days the herdsmen can see the ground soaked with his slimy blood. So that is the end of the vampire. In this Bulgarian custom the conception of the need-fire as a barrier set up between the cattle and a dangerous spirit is clearly worked out. The spirit rides the cow till he comes to the narrow pass between the two fires, but the heat there is too much for him; he drops in a faint from the saddle, or rather from

TREES TENANTED BY SPIRITS

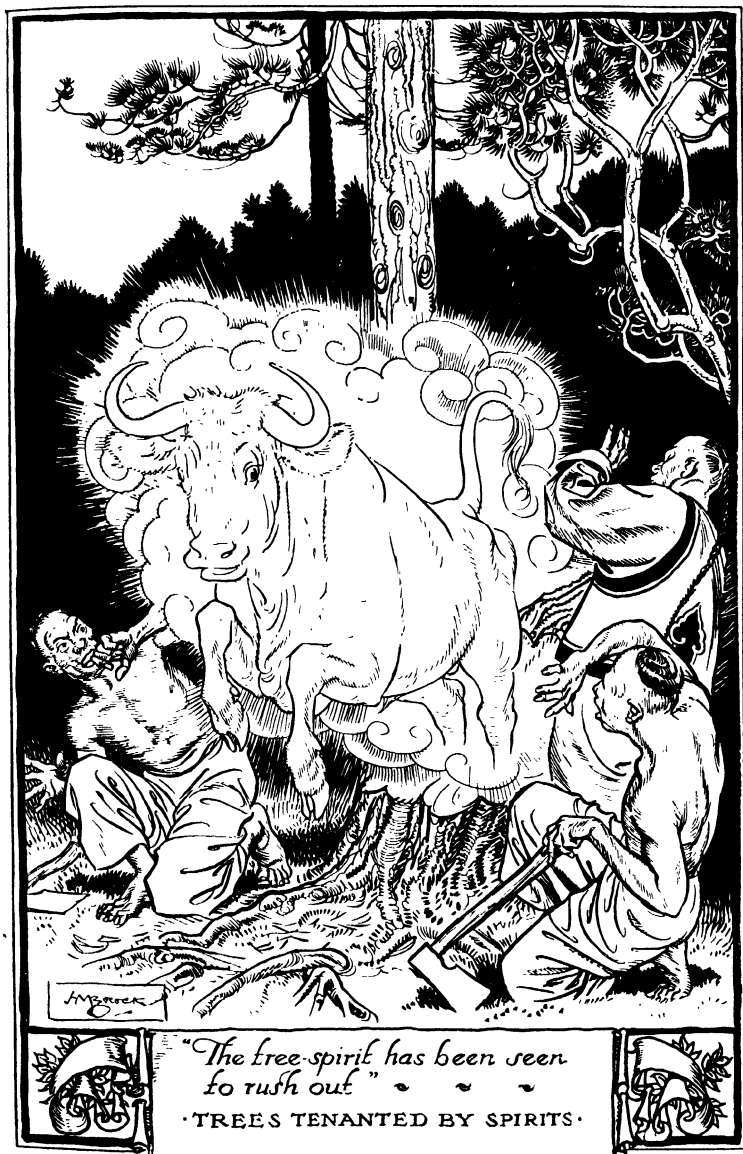
the horns, and the now riderless animal escapes safe and sound beyond the smoke and flame, leaving her persecutor prostrate on the ground on the further side of the blessed barrier.

TREES TENANTED BY SPIRITS

The Hidatsa Indians of North America believe that every natural object has its spirit, or to speak more properly, its shade. To these shades some consideration or respect is due, but not equally to all. For example, the shade of the cottonwood, the greatest tree in the valley of the Upper Missouri, is supposed to possess an intelligence which, if properly approached, may help the Indians in certain undertakings; but the shades of shrubs and grasses are of little account. When the Missouri, swollen by a freshet in spring, carries away part of its banks and sweeps some tall tree into its current, it is said that the spirit of the tree cries while the roots still cling to the land and until the trunk falls with a splash into the stream. Formerly the Indians considered it wrong to fell one of these giants, and when large logs were needed they made use only of trees which had fallen of themselves. Till lately some of the more credulous old men declared that many of the misfortunes of their people were caused by this modern disregard for the rights of the living cottonwood. The Iroquois believed that each species of tree, shrub, plant, and herb had its own spirit, and to these spirits it was their custom to

UNCANNY BEINGS

return thanks. The Wanika of Eastern Africa fancy that every tree, and especially every coco-nut tree, has its spirit; "the destruction of a cocoa-nut tree is regarded as equivalent to matricide, because that tree gives them life and nourishment, as a mother does her child." In the Yasawu islands of Fiji a man will never eat a coco-nut without first asking its leave—"May I eat you, my chief?" Among the Thompson Indians of British Columbia young people addressed the following prayer to the sunflower root before they ate the first roots of the season: "I inform thee that I intend to eat thee. Mayest thou always help me to ascend, so that I may always be able to reach the tops of mountains, and may I never be clumsy! I ask this from thee, Sunflower-Root. Thou art the greatest of all in mystery." To omit this prayer would have made the eater of the root lazy, and caused him to sleep long in the morning. We are not told, but may conjecture, that these Indians ascribed to the sunflower the sun's power of climbing above the mountain-tops and of rising betimes in the morning; hence whoever ate of the plant, with all the due formalities, would naturally acquire the same useful properties. The Dyaks ascribe souls to trees, and do not dare to cut down an old tree. In some places, when an old tree has been blown down, they set it up, smear it with blood, and deck it with flags "to appease the soul of the tree." Siamese monks, believing that there are souls everywhere, and that to destroy anything whatever is forcibly to dispossess a soul, will not break a branch of a tree,



*"The free-spirit has been seen
to rush out"*

• TREES TENANTED BY SPIRITS. •

TREES TENANTED BY SPIRITS

“as they will not break the arm of an innocent person.” According to Chinese belief, the spirits of plants are never shaped like plants but have commonly the form either of human beings or of animals, for example bulls and serpents. Occasionally at the felling of a tree the tree-spirit has been seen to rush out in the shape of a blue bull.

In China “to this day the belief in tree-spirits dangerous to man is obviously strong. In southern Fuhkien it deters people from felling any large trees or chopping off heavy branches, for fear the indwelling spirit may become irritated and visit the aggressor or his neighbours with disease and calamity. Especially respected are the green banyan or ch’ing, the biggest trees to be found in that part of China. In Amoy some people even show a strong aversion from planting trees, the planters, as soon as the stems have become as thick as their necks, being sure to be throttled by the indwelling spirits. No explanation of this curious superstition was ever given us. It may account to some extent for the almost total neglect of forestry in that part of China, so that hardly any except spontaneous trees grow there.”

Everywhere in Egypt on the borders of the cultivated land and even at some distance from the valley of the Nile, you meet with fine sycamores standing solitary and thriving as by a miracle in the sandy soil; their living green contrasts strongly with the tawny hue of the surrounding landscape, and their thick impenetrable foliage bids defiance even in summer to the noonday sun. The secret

UNCANNY BEINGS

of their verdure is that their roots strike down into rills of water that trickle by unseen sluices from the great river. Of old the Egyptians of every rank esteemed these trees divine, and paid them regular homage. They gave them figs, raisins, cucumbers, vegetables, and water in earthenware pitchers, which charitable folk filled afresh every day. Passers-by slaked their thirst at these pitchers in the sultry hours, and paid for the welcome draught by a short prayer. The spirit that animated these beautiful trees generally lurked unseen, but sometimes he would shew his head or even his whole body outside the trunk, but only to retire into it again. People in Congo set calabashes of palm-wine at the foot of certain trees for the trees to drink when they are thirsty.

SEDNA

In late autumn, when storms rage over the land of the Esquimaux and break the icy fetters by which the frozen sea is as yet but slightly bound, when the loosened floes are driven against each other and break with loud crashes, and when the cakes of ice are piled in wild disorder one upon another, the Esquimaux of Baffin Land fancy they hear the voices of the spirits who people the mischief-laden air. Then the ghosts of the dead knock wildly at the huts, which they cannot enter, and woe to the hapless wight whom they catch; he soon sickens and dies. Then the phantom of a huge hairless dog

SEDNA

pursues the real dogs, which expire in convulsions and cramps at sight of him. All the countless spirits of evil are abroad, striving to bring sickness and death, foul weather and failure in hunting on the Esquimaux. Most dreaded of all these spectral visitants are Sedna, mistress of the nether world, and her father, to whose share dead Esquimaux fall. While the other spirits fill the air and the water, she rises from under ground. It is then a busy season for the wizards. In every house you may hear them singing and praying, while they conjure the spirits, seated in a mystic gloom at the back of the hut, which is dimly lit by a lamp burning low. The hardest task of all is to drive away Sedna, and this is reserved for the most powerful enchanter. A rope is coiled on the floor of a large hut in such a way as to leave a small opening at the top, which represents the breathing hole of a seal. Two enchanters stand beside it, one of them grasping a spear as if he were watching a seal-hole in winter, the other holding the harpoon-line. A third sorcerer sits at the back of the hut chanting a magic song to lure Sedna to the spot. Now she is heard approaching under the floor of the hut, breathing heavily; now she emerges at the hole; now she is harpooned and sinks away in angry haste, dragging the harpoon with her, while the two men hold on to the line with all their might. The struggle is severe, but at last by a desperate wrench she tears herself away and returns to her dwelling in Adlivun. When the harpoon is drawn up out of the hole it is found to be splashed with blood, which the enchanters

UNCANNY BEINGS

proudly exhibit as a proof of their prowess. Thus Sedna and the other evil spirits are at last driven away, and next day a great festival is celebrated by old and young in honour of the event. But they must still be cautious, for the wounded Sedna is furious and will seize any one she may find outside of his hut; so they all wear amulets on the top of their hoods to protect themselves against her. These amulets consist of pieces of the first garments that they wore after birth.

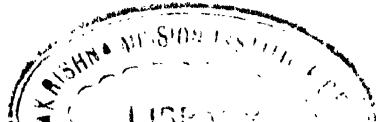
SMOKING OUT THE WITCHES

The belief in the maleficent power and activity of witches and wizards would seem to have weighed almost as heavily on the heathen of Central and Northern Europe in prehistoric times as it still weighs on the minds of African negroes and other savages in many parts of the world. But while these unhallowed beings were always with our forefathers, there were times and seasons of the year when they were supposed to be particularly mischievous, and when accordingly special precautions had to be taken against them. Among such times were the twelve days from Christmas to Twelfth Night, the Eve of St. George, the Eve of May Day (Walpurgis Night), and Midsummer Eve.

In Central Europe it was apparently on Walpurgis Night, the Eve of May Day, above all other times that the baleful powers of the witches were exerted to the fullest extent; nothing therefore

SMOKING OUT THE WITCHES

could be more natural than that men should be on their guard against them at that season, and that, not content with merely standing on their defence, they should boldly have sought to carry the war into the enemy's quarters by attacking and forcibly expelling the uncanny crew. Amongst the weapons with which they fought their invisible adversaries in these grim encounters were holy water, the fumes of incense or other combustibles, and loud noises of all kinds, particularly the clashing of metal instruments, amongst which the ringing of church bells was perhaps the most effectual. Some of these strong measures are still in use among the peasantry, or were so down to recent years, and there seems no reason to suppose that their magical virtue has been at all impaired by lapse of time. In the Tyrol, as in other places, the expulsion of the powers of evil at this season goes by the name of "Burning out the Witches." It takes place on May Day, but people have been busy with their preparations for days before. On a Thursday at midnight bundles are made up of resinous splinters, black and red spotted hemlock, caperspurge, rosemary, and twigs of the sloe. These are kept and burned on May Day. On the last three days of April all the houses are cleansed and fumigated with juniper berries and rue. On May Day, when the evening bell has rung and the twilight is falling, the ceremony of "Burning out the Witches" begins. Men and boys make a racket with whips, bells, pots, and pans; the women carry censers; the dogs are unchained and run barking and yelping about. As soon as the



UNCANNY BEINGS

church bells begin to ring, the bundles of twigs, fastened on poles, are set on fire and the incense is ignited. Then all the house-bells and dinner-bells are rung, pots and pans are clashed, dogs bark, every one must make a noise. And amid this hubbub all scream at the pitch of their voices,

Witch flee, flee from here,
Or it will go ill with thee.

Then they run seven times round the houses, the yards, and the village. So the witches are smoked out of their lurking-places and driven away.

THE JINNEE OF THE SEA

The famous Arab traveller Ibn Batutah was assured by several trustworthy natives, whose names he gives, that when the people of the Maldiv islands were idolaters there appeared to them every month an evil spirit among the jinn, who came from across the sea in the likeness of a ship full of burning lamps. The wont of the inhabitants, as soon as they perceived him, was to take a young girl, and, having adorned her, to lead her to a heathen temple that stood on the shore, with a window looking out to sea. There they left the damsel for the night, and when they came back in the morning they found her dead. Every month they drew lots, and he upon whom the lot fell gave up his daughter to the jinn of the sea. In time there came to them a Berber named Abu 'Ibrecat, who knew the Coran by heart. He lodged in the house of an old woman of the isle

THE JINNEE OF THE SEA

of Mahal. One day, visiting his hostess, he found that she had gathered her family about her, and that the women were weeping as if there were a funeral. On enquiring into the cause of their distress, he learned that the lot had fallen on the old woman, and that she had an only daughter, who must be slain by the evil jinnée. Abu 'Iberecat said to the old dame, "I will go this night instead of thy daughter." Now he was quite beardless. So when the night was come they took him, and after he had performed his ablutions, they put him in the temple of idols. He set himself to recite the Coran; then the demon appeared at the window, but the man went on with his recitation. No sooner was the jinnée within hearing of the holy words than he dived into the sea. When morning broke, the old woman and her family and the people of the island came, according to their custom, to carry away the girl and burn her body. They found the stranger repeating the Coran, and took him to their king, whose name was Chenourazah, and made him relate his adventure. The king was astonished at it. The Berber proposed to the king that he should embrace Islam. Chenourazah said to him, "Tarry with us till next month; if thou shalt do what thou hast done, and shalt escape from the evil jinnée, I will be converted." The stranger abode with the idolaters, and God disposed the king's heart to receive the true faith. So before the month was out he became a Mussalman, he and his wives and his children and the people of his court. And when the next month began, the Berber was conducted to

UNCANNY BEINGS

the temple of idols; but the demon did not appear, and the Berber set himself to recite the Coran till break of day. Then the Sultan and his subjects broke the idols and demolished the temple. The people of the island embraced Islam and sent messengers to the other isles, and their inhabitants were converted likewise. But by reason of the demon many of the Maldiv Islands were depopulated before their conversion to Islam. When Ibn Batutah himself landed in the country he knew nothing of these things. One night, as he was going about his business, he heard of a sudden people saying in a loud voice, "There is no God but God," and "God is great." He saw children carrying copies of the Coran on their heads, and women beating on basins and vessels of copper. He was astonished at what they did, and he said, "What has happened?" They answered, "Dost thou not behold the sea?" He looked towards the sea, and beheld in the darkness, as it were a great ship full of burning lamps and cressets. They said to him, "That is the demon. It is his wont to shew himself once a month; but after we have done that which thou hast seen, he returns to his place and does us no manner of harm."

PART III
QUAINT CUSTOMS

THE DOCTOR AND HIS PATIENTS

ONE of the great merits of certain forms of magic is that it enables the cure to be performed on the person of the doctor instead of on that of his victim, who is thus relieved of all trouble and inconvenience, while he sees his medical man writhe in anguish before him. For example, the peasants of Perche, in France, labour under the impression that a prolonged fit of vomiting is brought about by the patient's stomach becoming unhooked, as they call it, and so falling down. Accordingly, a practitioner is called in to restore the organ to its proper place. After hearing the symptoms he at once throws himself into the most horrible contortions, for the purpose of unhooking his own stomach. Having succeeded in the effort, he next hooks it up again in another series of contortions and grimaces, while the patient experiences a corresponding relief. Fee five francs. In like manner a Dyak medicine-man, who has been fetched in a case of illness, will lie down and pretend to be dead. He is accordingly treated like a corpse, is bound up in mats, taken out of the house, and deposited on the ground. After about an hour the other medicine-men loose the

QUAINT CUSTOMS

pretended dead man and bring him to life; and as he recovers, the sick person is supposed to recover too. A cure for a tumour, based on the principle of certain forms of magic, is prescribed by Marcellus of Bordeaux, court physician to Theodosius the First, in his curious work on medicine. It is as follows. Take a root of vervain, cut it across, and hang one end of it round the patient's neck, and the other in the smoke of the fire. As the vervain dries up in the smoke, so the tumour will also dry up and disappear. If the patient should afterwards prove ungrateful to the good physician, the man of skill can avenge himself very easily by throwing the vervain into water; for as the root absorbs the moisture once more, the tumour will return. The same sapient writer recommends you, if you are troubled with pimples, to watch for a falling star, and then instantly, while the star is still shooting from the sky, to wipe the pimples with a cloth or anything that comes to hand. Just as the star falls from the sky, so the pimples will fall from your body; only you must be very careful not to wipe them with your bare hand, or the pimples will be transferred to it.

CURE OF JAUNDICE

The ancient Hindoos performed an elaborate ceremony for the cure of jaundice. Its main drift was to banish the yellow colour to yellow creatures and yellow things, such as the sun, to which it

CURE OF JAUNDICE

properly belongs, and to procure for the patient a healthy red colour from a living, vigorous source, namely a red bull. With this intention, a priest recited the following spell: “Up to the sun shall go thy heart-ache and thy jaundice: in the colour of the red bull do we envelop thee! We envelop thee in red tints, unto long life. May this person go unscathed and be free of yellow colour! The cows whose divinity is Rohini, they who, moreover, are themselves red—in their every form and every strength we do envelop thee. Into the parrots, into the thrush, do we put thy jaundice, and, furthermore, into the yellow wagtail do we put thy jaundice.” While he uttered these words, the priest, in order to infuse the rosy hue of health into the sallow patient, gave him water to sip which was mixed with the hair of a red bull; he poured water over the animal’s back and made the sick man drink it; he seated him on the skin of a red bull and tied a piece of the skin to him. Then in order to improve his colour by thoroughly eradicating the yellow taint, he proceeded thus. He first daubed him from head to foot with a yellow porridge made of turmeric or curcuma (a yellow plant), set him on a bed, tied three yellow birds, to wit a parrot, a thrush, and a yellow wagtail, by means of a yellow string to the foot of the bed; then pouring water over the patient, he washed off the yellow porridge, and with it no doubt the jaundice, from him to the birds. After that, by way of giving a final bloom to his complexion, he took some hairs of a red bull, wrapt them in gold leaf, and glued them to the

QUAINT CUSTOMS

patient's skin. The ancients held that if a person suffering from jaundice looked sharply at a stone-curlew, and the bird looked steadily at him, he was cured of the disease. "Such is the nature," says Plutarch, "and such the temperament of the creature that it draws out and receives the malady which issues, like a stream, through the eyesight." So well recognized among bird-fanciers was this valuable property of the stone-curlew that when they had one of these birds for sale they kept it carefully covered, lest a jaundiced person should look at it and be cured for nothing. The virtue of the bird lay not in its colour but in its large golden eye, which, if it do not pass for a tuft of yellow lichen, is the first thing that strikes the searcher, as the bird cowers, to escape observation, on the sandy, flint-strewn surface of the ground which it loves to haunt, and with which its drab plumage blends so well that only a practised eye can easily detect it. Thus the yellow eye of the bird drew out the yellow jaundice. Pliny tells of another, or perhaps the same, bird, to which the Greeks gave their name for jaundice, because if a jaundiced man saw it, the disease left him and slew the bird. He mentions also a stone which was supposed to cure jaundice because its hue resembled that of a jaundiced skin. In modern Greece jaundice goes by the name of the Golden Disease, and very naturally it can be healed by gold. To effect a perfect cure all that you have to do is this. Take a piece of gold (best of all an English sovereign, since English gold is the purest) and put it in a measure of wine. Expose the wine

CURES FOR TOOTHACHE

with the gold to the stars for three nights; then drink three glasses of it daily till it is used up. By that time the jaundice will be quite washed out of your system. The cure is, in the strictest sense of the word, a sovereign one.

CURES FOR TOOTHACHE

At the head of Glen Mor, near Port Charlotte, in Islay, there may be seen a large boulder, and it is said that whoever drives a nail into this stone will thereafter be secure from attacks of toothache. A farmer in Islay told an enquirer some years ago how a passing stranger once cured his grandmother of toothache by driving a horse-nail into the lintel of the kitchen door, warning her at the same time to keep the nail there, and if it should come loose just to tap it with a hammer till it had a grip again. She had no more toothache for the rest of her life. In Brunswick it is open to any one to nail his toothache either into a wall or into a tree, as he thinks fit; the pain is cured quite as well in the one way as in the other. So in Beauce and Perche a healer has been known to place a new nail on the aching tooth of a sufferer and then knock the nail into a door, a beam, or a joist. The procedure in North Africa is similar. You write certain Arabic letters and numbers on the wall; then, while the patient puts a finger on the aching tooth, you knock a nail, with a light tap of a hammer, into the first letter on the wall, reciting a verse of the Coran as you do so.

QUAINT CUSTOMS

Next you ask the sufferer whether the pain is now abated, and if he says "Yes," you draw out the nail entirely. But if he says "No," you shift the nail to the next letter in the wall, and so on, till the pain goes away, which it always does, sooner or later.

MAGICAL IMAGES

In ancient Babylonia it was a common practice to make an image of clay, pitch, honey, fat, or other soft material in the likeness of an enemy, and to injure or kill him by burning, burying, or otherwise ill-treating it. Thus in a hymn to the fire-god Nusku we read:

Those who have made images of me, reproducing my features,
Who have taken away my breath, torn my hairs,
Who have rent my clothes, have hindered my feet from treading
the dust,
May the fire-god, the strong one, break their charm.

But both in Babylon and in Egypt this ancient tool of superstition, so baneful in the hands of the mischievous and malignant, was turned to glorious account for the confusion and overthrow of demons. In a Babylonian incantation we meet with a long list of evil spirits whose effigies were burnt by the magician in the hope that, as their images melted in the fire, so the fiends themselves might melt away and disappear. Every night when the sun-god Ra sank down to his home in the glowing west he was assailed by hosts of demons under the leadership of

MAGICAL IMAGES

the arch-fiend Apepi. All night long he fought them, and sometimes by day the powers of darkness sent up clouds even into the blue Egyptian sky to obscure his light and weaken his power. To aid the sun-god in this daily struggle, a ceremony was daily performed in his temple at Thebes. A figure of his foe Apepi, represented as a crocodile with a hideous face or a serpent with many coils, was made of wax, and on it the demon's name was written in green ink. Wrapt in a papyrus case, on which another likeness of Apepi had been drawn in green ink, the figure was then tied up with black hair, spat upon, hacked with a stone knife, and cast on the ground. There the priest trod on it with his left foot again and again, and then burned it in a fire made of a certain plant or grass. When Apepi himself had thus been effectually disposed of, waxen effigies of each of his principal demons, and of their fathers, mothers, and children, were made and burnt in the same way. The service, accompanied by the recitation of certain prescribed spells, was repeated not merely morning, noon, and night, but whenever a storm was raging, or heavy rain had set in, or black clouds were stealing across the sky to hide the sun's bright disc. The fiends of darkness, clouds, and rain felt the injuries inflicted on their images as if they had been done to themselves; they passed away, at least for a time, and the beneficent sun-god shone out triumphant once more.

QUAINT CUSTOMS

MAGIC VIRTUE OF A BLIND CAT AND OTHER CREATURES

If a South Slavonian has a mind to pilfer and steal at market, he has nothing to do but to burn a blind cat, and then throw a pinch of its ashes over the person with whom he is higgling; after that he can take what he likes from the booth, and the owner will not be a bit the wiser, having become as blind as the deceased cat with whose ashes he has been sprinkled. The thief may even ask boldly, "Did I pray for it?" and the deluded huckster will reply, "Why, certainly." Equally simple and effectual is the expedient adopted by natives of Central Australia who desire to cultivate their beards. They prick the chin all over with a pointed bone, and then stroke it carefully with a magic stick or stone, which represents a kind of rat that has very long whiskers. The virtue of these whiskers naturally passes into the representative stick or stone, and thence by an easy transition to the chin, which, consequently, is soon adorned with a rich growth of beard. When a party of these same natives has returned from killing a foe, and they fear to be attacked by the ghost of the dead man in their sleep, every one of them takes care to wear the tip of the tail of a rabbit-kangaroo in his hair. Why? Because the rabbit-kangaroo, being a nocturnal animal, does not sleep of nights; and therefore a man who wears a tip of its tail in his hair will clearly be wakeful during the hours of darkness. The Unmatjera tribe of Central Australia use the tip of the tail of the same

MAGIC VIRTUE OF A BLIND CAT

animal for the same purpose, but they draw out the sympathetic chain one link farther. For among them, when a boy has undergone an operation and is leading a solitary life in the bush, it is not he but his mother who wears the tip of the nocturnal creature's tail in order that he may be watchful at nights, lest harm should befall him from snakes and so forth. The ancient Greeks thought that to eat the flesh of the wakeful nightingale would prevent a man from sleeping; that to smear the eyes of a blear-sighted person with the gall of an eagle would give him the eagle's vision; and that a raven's egg would restore the blackness of the raven to silvery hair. Only the person who adopted this last mode of concealing the ravages of time had to be most careful to keep his mouth full of oil all the time he applied the eggs to his venerable locks, else his teeth as well as his hair would be dyed raven black, and no amount of scrubbing and scouring would avail to whiten them again. The hair-restorer was in fact a shade too powerful, and in applying it you might get more than you bargained for.

The Huichol Indians of Mexico admire the beautiful markings on the backs of serpents. Hence when a Huichol woman is about to weave or embroider, her husband catches a large serpent and holds it in a cleft stick, while the woman strokes the reptile with one hand down the whole length of its back; then she passes the same hand over her forehead and eyes, that she may be able to work as beautiful patterns in the web as the markings on the back of the serpent.

QUAINT CUSTOMS

LONGEVITY CLOTHES

To ensure a long life the Chinese have recourse to certain complicated charms, which concentrate in themselves the magical essence emanating from times and seasons, from persons and from things. The vehicles employed to transmit these happy influences are no other than grave-clothes. These are provided by many Chinese in their lifetime, and most people have them cut out and sewn by an unmarried girl or a very young woman, wisely calculating that, since such a person is likely to live a great many years to come, a part of her capacity to live long must surely pass into the clothes, and thus stave off for many years the time when they shall be put to their proper use. Further, the garments are made by preference in a year which has an intercalary month; for to the Chinese mind it seems plain that grave-clothes made in a year which is unusually long will possess the capacity of prolonging life in an unusually high degree. Amongst the clothes there is one robe in particular on which special pains have been lavished to imbue it with this priceless quality. It is a long silken gown of the deepest blue colour, with the word "longevity" embroidered all over it in thread of gold. To present an aged parent with one of these costly and splendid mantles, known as "longevity garments," is esteemed by the Chinese an act of filial piety and a delicate mark of attention. As the garment purports to prolong the life of its owner,

RAIN-MAKING IN CHINA

he often wears it, especially on festive occasions, in order to allow the influence of longevity, created by the many golden letters with which it is bespangled, to work their full effect upon his person. On his birthday, above all, he hardly ever fails to don it, for in China common sense bids a man lay in a large stock of vital energy on his birthday, to be expended in the form of health and vigour during the rest of the year. Attired in the gorgeous pail, and absorbing its blessed influence at every pore, the happy owner receives complacently the congratulations of friends and relations, who warmly express their admiration of these magnificent ceremonies, and of the filial piety which prompted the children to bestow so beautiful and useful a present on the author of their being.

RAIN-MAKING IN CHINA

The Chinese are adepts in the art of taking the kingdom of heaven by storm. Thus, when rain is wanted they make a huge dragon of paper or wood to represent the rain-god, and carry it about in procession; but if no rain follows, the mock-dragon is execrated and torn to pieces. At other times they threaten and beat the god if he does not give rain; sometimes they publicly depose him from the rank of deity. On the other hand, if the wished-for rain falls, the god is promoted to a higher rank by an imperial decree. It is said that in the reign of Kia-King, fifth emperor of the Manchu dynasty, a long

QUAINT CUSTOMS

drought desolated several provinces of northern China. Processions were of no avail; the rain-dragon hardened his heart and would not let a drop fall. At last the emperor lost patience and condemned the recalcitrant deity to perpetual exile on the banks of the River Illi in the province of Torgot. The decree was in process of execution; the divine criminal, with a touching resignation, was already traversing the deserts of Tartary to work out his sentence on the borders of Turkestan, when the judges of the High Court of Peking, moved with compassion, flung themselves at the feet of the emperor and implored his pardon for the poor devil. The emperor consented to revoke his doom, and a messenger set off at full gallop to bear the tidings to the executors of the imperial justice. The dragon was reinstated in his office on condition of performing his duties a little better in future. About the year 1710 the island of Tsong-ming, which belongs to the province of Nanking, was afflicted with a drought. The viceroy of the province, after the usual attempts to soften the heart of the local deity by burning incense-sticks had been made in vain, sent word to the idol that if rain did not fall by such and such a day, he would have him turned out of the city and his temple razed to the ground. The threat had no effect on the obdurate divinity; the day of grace came and went, and yet no rain fell. Then the indignant viceroy forbade the people to make any more offerings at the shrine of this unfeeling deity, and commanded that the temple should be shut up and seals placed on the doors.

RAIN-MAKING IN CHINA

This soon produced the desired effect. Cut off from his base of supplies, the idol had no choice but to surrender at discretion. Rain fell in a few days, and thus the god was restored to the affections of the faithful. In some parts of China the mandarins procure rain or fine weather by shutting the southern or the northern gates of the city. For the south wind brings drought and the north wind brings showers. Hence by closing the southern and opening the northern gates you clearly exclude drought and admit rain; whereas contrariwise, by shutting the northern and opening the southern gates, you bar out the clouds and the wet and let in sunshine and genial warmth. In April 1888 the mandarins of Canton prayed to the god Lung-wong to stop the incessant downpour of rain, and when he turned a deaf ear to their petitions they put him in a lock-up for five days. This had a salutary effect. The rain ceased and the god was restored to liberty. Some years before, in time of drought, the same deity had been chained and exposed to the sun for days in the courtyard of his temple in order that he might feel for himself the urgent need of rain. So when the Siamese need rain, they set out their idols in the blazing sun; but if they want dry weather, they unroof the temples and let the rain pour down on the idols. They think that the inconvenience to which the gods are thus subjected will induce them to grant the wishes of their worshippers. When the rice-crop is endangered by long drought, the governor of Battambang, a province of Siam, goes in great state to a certain pagoda and prays to

QUAINT CUSTOMS

Buddha for rain. Then, accompanied by his suite and followed by an enormous crowd, he adjourns to a plain behind the pagoda. Here a dummy figure has been made up, dressed in bright colours, and placed in the middle of the plain. A wild music begins to play; maddened by the din of drums and cymbals and crackers, and goaded on by their drivers, the elephants charge down on the dummy and trample it to pieces. After this, Buddha will soon give rain.

BINDING THE WIND BY MAGIC

Under the reign of Constantine a certain Sopater suffered death at Constantinople on a charge of binding the winds by magic, because it happened that the corn-ships of Egypt and Syria were detained afar off by calms or head-winds, to the rage and disappointment of the hungry Byzantine rabble. An ancient charm to keep storms from damaging the crops was to bury a toad in a new earthen vessel in the middle of the field. Finnish wizards used to sell wind to storm-stayed mariners. The wind was enclosed in three knots; if they undid the first knot, a moderate wind sprang up; if the second, it blew half a gale; if the third, a hurricane. Indeed the Esthonians, whose country is divided from Finland only by an arm of the sea, still believe in the magical powers of their northern neighbours. The bitter winds that blow in spring from the north and north-east, bringing ague and rheumatic inflammations in

BINDING THE WIND BY MAGIC

their train, are set down by the simple Esthonian peasantry to the machinations of the Finnish wizards and witches. In particular they regard with special dread three days in spring to which they give the name of Days of the Cross; one of them falls on the Eve of Ascension Day. The people in the neighbourhood of Fellin fear to go out on these days lest the cruel winds from Lappland should smite them dead. A popular Esthonian song runs:

Wind of the Cross! rushing and mighty!
Heavy the blow of thy wings sweeping past!
Wild wailing wind of misfortune and sorrow,
Wizards of Finland ride by on the blast.

It is said, too, that sailors, beating up against the wind in the Gulf of Finland, sometimes see a strange sail heave in sight astern and overhaul them hand over hand. On she comes with a cloud of canvas—all her studding-sails out—right in the teeth of the wind, forging her way through the foaming billows, dashing back the spray in sheets from her cutwater, every sail swollen to bursting, every rope strained to cracking. Then the sailors know that she hails from Finland.

The art of tying up the wind in three knots, so that the more knots are loosed the stronger will blow the wind, has been attributed to wizards in Lappland and to witches in Shetland, Lewis, and the Isle of Man. Shetland seamen still buy winds in the shape of knotted handkerchiefs or threads from old women who claim to rule the storms. There are said to be ancient crones in Lerwick now who live by selling wind. In the early part of the nineteenth

QUAINT CUSTOMS

century Sir Walter Scott visited one of these witches at Stromness in the Orkneys. He says: "We clomb, by steep and dirty lanes, an eminence rising above the town, and commanding a fine view. An old hag lives in a wretched cabin on this height, and subsists by selling winds. Each captain of a merchantman, between jest and earnest, gives the old woman sixpence, and she boils her kettle to procure a favourable gale. She was a miserable figure; upwards of ninety, she told us, and dried up like a mummy. A sort of clay-coloured cloak, folded over her head, corresponded in colour to her corpse-like complexion. Fine light-blue eyes, and nose and chin that almost met, and a ghastly expression of cunning, gave her quite the effect of Hecate." A Norwegian witch has boasted of sinking a ship by opening a bag in which she had shut up a wind. Ulysses received the winds in a leathern bag from Aeolus, King of the Winds. The Motumotu in New Guinea think that storms are sent by an Oiabu sorcerer; for each wind he has a bamboo which he opens at pleasure. On the top of Mount Agu in Togo, a district of West Africa, resides a fetish called Bagba, who is supposed to control the wind and the rain. His priest is said to keep the winds shut up in great pots.

Often a stormy wind is regarded as an evil being who may be intimidated, driven away, or killed. When the darkening of the sky indicates the approach of a tornado, a South African magician will repair to a height, whither he collects as many people as can be hastily summoned to his assistance.

BINDING THE WIND BY MAGIC

Directed by him, they shout and bellow in imitation of the gust as it swirls roaring about the huts and among the trees of the forest. Then at a signal they mimic the crash of the thunder, after which there is a dead silence for a few seconds; then follows a screech more piercing and prolonged than any that preceded, dying away in a tremulous wail. The magician fills his mouth with a foul liquid, which he squirts in defiant jets against the approaching storm as a kind of menace or challenge to the spirit of the wind; and the shouting and wailing of his assistants are meant to frighten the spirit away. The performance lasts until the tornado either bursts or passes away in another direction. If it bursts, the reason is that the magician who sent the storm was more powerful than he who endeavoured to avert it. When storms and bad weather have lasted long and food is scarce with the Central Esquimaux, they endeavour to conjure the tempest by making a long whip of seaweed, armed with which they go down to the beach and strike out in the direction of the wind, crying, "*Taba* (it is enough)!" Once when north-westerly winds had kept the ice long on the coast and food was becoming scarce, the Esquimaux performed a ceremony to make a calm. A fire was kindled on the shore, and the men gathered round it and chanted. An old man then stepped up to the fire, and in a coaxing voice invited the demon of the wind to come under the fire and warm himself. When he was supposed to have arrived, a vessel of water, to which each man present had contributed, was thrown on the flames by an old

QUAINT CUSTOMS

man, and immediately a flight of arrows sped towards the spot where the fire had been. They thought that the demon would not stay where he had been so badly treated. To complete the effect, guns were discharged in various directions, and the captain of a European vessel was invited to fire on the wind with cannon. On the twenty-first of February 1883 a similar ceremony was performed by the Esquimaux of Point Barrow, Alaska, with the intention of killing the spirit of the wind. Women drove the demon from their houses with clubs and knives, with which they made passes in the air; and the men, gathering round a fire, shot him with their rifles and crushed him under a heavy stone the moment that steam rose in a cloud from the smouldering embers, on which a tub of water had just been thrown.

In ancient India the priest was directed to confront a storm, armed to the teeth with a bludgeon, a sword, and a firebrand, while he chanted a magical lay. During a tremendous hurricane the drums of Kadouma, near the Victoria Nyanza, were heard to beat all night. When next morning a missionary enquired the cause, he was told that the sound of the drums is a charm against storms. The Sea Dyaks and Kayans of Borneo beat gongs when a tempest is raging; but the Dyaks, and perhaps the Kayans also, do this, not so much to frighten away the spirit of the storm, as to apprise him of their whereabouts, lest he should inadvertently knock their houses down. Heard at night above the howling of the storm, the distant boom of the gongs has

BINDING THE WIND BY MAGIC

a weird effect; and sometimes, before the notes can be distinguished for the wind and rain, they strike fear into a neighbouring village; lights are extinguished, the women are put in a place of safety, and the men stand to their arms to resist an attack. Then with a lull in the wind the true nature of the gong-beating is recognized, and the alarm subsides.

On calm summer days in the Highlands of Scotland eddies of wind sometimes go past, whirling about dust and straws, though not another breath of air is stirring. The Highlanders think that the fairies are in these eddies carrying away men, women, children, or animals, and they will fling their left shoe, or their bonnet, or a knife, or earth from a mole-hill at the eddy to make the fairies drop their booty. When a gust lifts the hay in the meadow, the Breton peasant throws a knife or a fork at it to prevent the devil from carrying off the hay. Similarly in the Esthonian island of Oesel, when the reapers are busy among the corn and the wind blows about the ears that have not yet been tied into sheaves, the reapers slash at it with their sickles. The custom of flinging a knife or a hat at a whirlwind is observed alike by German, Slavonian, and Esthonian rustics; they think that a witch or wizard is riding on the blast, and that the knife, if it hits the witch, will be reddened by her blood or will disappear altogether, sticking in the wound it has inflicted. Sometimes Esthonian peasants run shrieking and shouting behind a whirlwind, hurling sticks and stones into the flying dust. The Lengua Indians of the Gran Chaco ascribe the rush of a

QUAINT CUSTOMS

whirlwind to the passage of a spirit, and they fling sticks at it to frighten it away. When the wind blows down their huts, the Payaguas of South America snatch up firebrands and run against the wind, menacing it with the blazing brands, while others beat the air with their fists to frighten the storm. When the Guaycurus are threatened by a severe storm, the men go out armed, and the women and children scream their loudest to intimidate the demon. During a tempest the inhabitants of a Batta village in Sumatra have been seen to rush from their houses armed with sword and lance. The Rajah placed himself at their head, and with shouts and yells they hewed and hacked at the invisible foe. An old woman was observed to be specially active in the defence of her house, slashing the air right and left with a long sabre. In a violent thunderstorm, the peals sounding very near, the Kayans of Borneo have been seen to draw their swords threateningly half out of their scabbards, as if to frighten away the demons of the storm. In Australia the huge columns of red sand that move rapidly across a desert tract are thought by the natives to be spirits passing along. Once an athletic young black ran after one of these moving columns to kill it with boomerangs. He was away two or three hours, and came back very weary, saying he had killed Koochee (the demon), but that Koochee had growled at him and he must die. Of the Bedouins of Eastern Africa it is said that "no whirlwind ever sweeps across the path without being pursued by a dozen savages with drawn creeses, who

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST WITCHCRAFT

stab into the centre of the dusty column in order to drive away the evil spirit that is believed to be riding on the blast."

A story told by Herodotus, which his modern critics have treated as a fable, is perfectly credible. He says, without however vouching for the truth of the tale, that once in the land of the Psylli, the modern Tripoli, the wind blowing from the Sahara had dried up all the water-tanks. So the people took counsel and marched in a body to make war on the south wind. But when they entered the desert the simoom swept down on them and buried them to a man. The story may well have been told by one who watched them disappearing, in battle array, with drums and cymbals beating, into the red cloud of whirling sand.

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST WITCHCRAFT

It seems that the influence of the May tree, bush, or bough is really protective; it does not so much fill the udders of the cows as prevent them from being drained dry by witches, who ride on broomsticks or pitchforks through the air on the Eve of May Day (the famous Walpurgis Night) and make great efforts to steal the milk from the cattle. Hence the many precautions which the prudent herdsman must take to guard his beasts at this season from the raids of these baleful creatures. For example, on May morning the Irish scatter primroses on the threshold, keep a piece of red-hot

QUAINT CUSTOMS

iron on the hearth, or twine branches of white-thorn and mountain-ash or rowan about the door. To save the milk they cut and peel boughs of mountain-ash (rowan), and bind the twigs round the milk-pails and the churn. According to a writer of the sixteenth century, whose description is quoted by Camden, the Irish "account every woman who fetches fire on May-day a witch, nor will they give it to any but sick persons, and that with an imprecation, believing she will steal all the butter the next summer. On May-day they kill all the hares they find among their cattle, supposing them the old women who have designs on the butter. They imagine the butter so stolen may be recovered if they take some of the thatch hanging over the door and burn it." In the north-east of Scotland pieces of rowan-tree and woodbine, or of rowan alone, used to be placed over the doors of the cowhouses on May Day to keep the witches from the kine; and a still better way of attaining the same object was to tie a cross of rowan-tree wood with a scarlet thread to each animal's tail. The Highlanders of Scotland believe that on Beltane Eve, that is, the night before May Day, the witches go about in the shape of hares and suck the milk from the cows. To guard against their depredations tar was put behind the ears of the cattle and at the root of the tail, and the house was hung with rowan-tree. For the same reason the Highlanders say that the peg of the cow-shackle and the handle and cross of the churn-staff should always be made of rowan, because that is the most potent charm



*"The witches are caught
by the thorns" ▲ ▲ ▲*

• PRECAUTIONS AGAINST WITCHCRAFT •

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST WITCHCRAFT

against witchcraft. In the Isle of Man on May Day, old style, people carried crosses of rowan in their hats and fastened May-flowers over their doors as a protection against elves and witches, and for the same purpose they tied crosses of rowan to the tails of the cattle. Also women washed their faces in the dew early on May morning in order to secure good luck, a fine complexion, and immunity from witches. Further, the break of day on that morning was the signal for setting the ling or gorse on fire, which was done for the sake of burning out the witches, who are wont to take the shape of hares. In some places, indeed, as in the Lezayre parish, the practice was to burn gorse in the hedge of every field to drive away the witches, who are still feared in the Isle of Man. In Norway and Denmark branches of rowan are similarly used to protect houses and cattle-stalls against witches on Walpurgis Night, and there, too, it is thought that the churn-staff should be made of rowan. In Germany a common way of keeping witches from the cattle on Walpurgis Night is to chalk up three crosses on the door of the cow-house. Branches of buckthorn stuck in the muck-heaps on the eve of May Day answer the same purpose. In Silesia the precautions taken at this season against witches are many and various; for example, pieces of buckthorn are nailed crosswise over the door of the cowhouse; pitchforks and harrows, turned upside down, with the prongs pointing outwards, are placed at the doors; and a sod of fresh turf from a meadow is laid before the threshold and strewed with marsh-marigolds.

QUAINT CUSTOMS

Before the witches can pass the threshold they must count every blade of grass in the turf and every petal of the marigolds; and while they are still counting the day breaks and their power is gone. For the same reason little birch-trees are set up at the house-door, because the witches cannot enter the house till they have counted all the leaves; and before they have done the sum it is broad daylight, and they must flee away with the shadows. On Walpurgis Night the Germans of Moravia put knives under the threshold of the cowhouse and twigs of birch at the door and in the muck-heap to keep the witches from the cows. For the same purpose the Bohemians at this season lay branches of gooseberry bushes, hawthorn, and wild rose-trees on the thresholds of the cowhouses, because the witches are caught by the thorns and can get no farther. We now see why thorny trees and bushes, whether hawthorn, buckthorn, or what not, afford protection against witchcraft: they serve as prickly hedges through which the witches cannot force their way.

MARRIAGE OF THE HOLY BASIL

The holy basil is a small shrub, not too big to be grown in a large flower-pot, and is often placed in rooms; indeed there is hardly a respectable Hindoo family that does not possess one. In spite of its humble appearance, the shrub is pervaded by the essence of Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi, and is itself

MARRIAGE OF THE HOLY BASIL

worshipped daily as a deity. The plant is especially a woman's divinity, being regarded as an embodiment of Vishnu's wife Lakshmi, or of Rama's wife Sita, or of Krishna's wife Rukmini. Women worship it by walking round it and praying or offering flowers and rice to it. Now this sacred plant, as the embodiment of a goddess, is annually married to the god Krishna in every Hindoo family. The ceremony takes place in the month of November. In Western India they often bring an idol of the youthful Krishna in a gorgeous palanquin, followed by a long train of attendants, to the house of a rich man to be wedded to the basil; and the festivities are celebrated with great pomp. Again, as the wife of Vishnu, the holy basil is married to the *Salagrama*, a black fossil ammonite which is regarded as an embodiment of Vishnu. In North-western India this marriage of the plant to the fossil has to be performed before it is lawful to taste of the fruit of a new orchard. A man holding the fossil personates the bridegroom, and another holding the basil represents the bride. After burning a sacrificial fire, the officiating Brahman puts the usual questions to the couple about to be united. Bride and bridegroom walk six times round a small spot marked out in the centre of the orchard. Further, no well is considered lucky until the *Salagrama* has been solemnly wedded to the holy basil, which stands for the garden that the well is intended to water. The relations assemble; the owner of the garden represents the bridegroom, while a kinsman of his wife personates the bride. Gifts are given to

QUAINT CUSTOMS

the Brahmans, a feast is held in the garden, and after that both garden and well may be used without danger. The same marriage of the sacred fossil to the sacred plant is celebrated annually by the Rajah of Orchha at Ludhaura. A former Rajah used to spend a sum equal to about thirty thousand pounds, being one-fourth of his revenue, upon the ceremony. On one occasion over a hundred thousand people are said to have been present at the rite, and to have been feasted at the expense of the Rajah. The procession consisted of eight elephants, twelve hundred camels, and four thousand horses, all mounted and elegantly caparisoned. The most sumptuously decorated of the elephants carried the fossil god to pay his bridal visit to the little shrub goddess. On such an occasion all the rites of a regular marriage are performed, and afterwards the newly-wedded couple are left in the temple till the next year.

THREATENING TREE SPIRITS

The spirits of vegetation are not always treated with deference and respect. If fair words and kind treatment do not move them, stronger measures are sometimes resorted to. The durian-tree of the East Indies, whose smooth stem often shoots up to a height of eighty or ninety feet without sending out a branch, bears a fruit of the most delicious flavour and the most disgusting stench. The Malays cultivate the tree for the sake of its fruit, and have

THREATENING TREE SPIRITS

been known to resort to a peculiar ceremony for the purpose of stimulating its fertility. Near Jugra in Selangor there is a small grove of durian-trees, and on a specially chosen day the villagers used to assemble in it. Thereupon one of the local sorcerers would take a hatchet and deliver several shrewd blows on the trunk of the most barren of the trees, saying, "Will you now bear fruit or not? If you do not, I shall fell you." To this the tree replied through the mouth of another man who had climbed a mangostin-tree hard by (the durian-tree being unclimbable), "Yes, I will now bear fruit; I beg you not to fell me." So in Japan to make trees bear fruit two men go into an orchard. One of them climbs up a tree and the other stands at the foot with an axe. The man with the axe asks the tree whether it will yield a good crop next year, and threatens to cut it down if it does not. To this the man among the branches replies on behalf of the tree that it will bear abundantly. Odd as this mode of horticulture may seem to us, it has its exact parallels in Europe. On Christmas Eve many a South Slavonian and Bulgarian peasant swings an axe threateningly against a barren fruit-tree, while another man standing by intercedes for the menaced tree, saying, "Do not cut it down; it will soon bear fruit." Thrice the axe is swung, and thrice the impending blow is arrested at the entreaty of the intercessor. After that the frightened tree will certainly bear fruit next year. So at the village of Ucria in Sicily, if a tree obstinately refuses to bear fruit, the owner pretends to hew it down. Just as

QUAINT CUSTOMS

the axe is about to fall, a friend intercedes for the tree, begging him to have patience for one year more, and promising not to interfere again if the culprit has not mended his ways by then. The owner grants his request, and the Sicilians say that a tree seldom remains deaf to such a menace. The ceremony is performed on Easter Saturday. In Armenia the same pantomime is sometimes performed by two men for the same purpose on Good Friday. In the Abruzzi the ceremony takes place before sunrise on the morning of St. John's Day (Midsummer Day). The owner threatens the trees which are slow to bear fruit. Thrice he walks round each sluggard, repeating his threat and striking the trunk with the head of an axe. In Lesbos, when an orange-tree or a lemon-tree does not bear fruit, the owner will sometimes set a looking-glass before the tree; then, standing with an axe in his hand over against the tree and gazing at its reflection in the glass, he will feign to fall into a passion, and will say aloud, "Bear fruit, or I'll cut you down." When cabbages merely curl their leaves instead of forming heads as they ought to do, an Esthonian peasant will go out into the garden before sunrise, clad only in his shirt and armed with a scythe, which he sweeps over the refractory vegetables as if he meant to cut them down. This intimidates the cabbages and brings them to a sense of their duty.

WILD THYME AND ELDER FLOWERS

WILD THYME, ELDER FLOWERS, AND FERN

In Bohemia poachers fancy that they can render themselves invulnerable by swallowing the seed from a fir-cone which they have found growing upwards before sunrise on the morning of St. John's Day. Again, wild thyme gathered on Midsummer Day is used in Bohemia to fumigate the trees on Christmas Eve in order that they may grow well. The Germans of western Bohemia brew a tea or wine from elder-flowers, but they say that the brew has no medicinal virtue unless the flowers have been gathered on Midsummer Eve. They do say, too, that whenever you see an elder-tree you should take off your hat. In the Tyrol dwarf-elder serves to detect witchcraft in cattle, provided of course that the shrub has been pulled up or the branches broken on Midsummer Day. Russian peasants regard the plant known as purple loosestrife with respect and even fear. Wizards make much use of it. They dig the root up on St. John's Morning, at break of day, without the use of iron tools; and they believe that by means of the root, as well as of the blossom, they can subdue evil spirits and make them serviceable, and also drive away witches and the demons that guard treasures.

More famous, however, than these are the marvellous properties which popular superstition in many parts of Europe has attributed to the fern at this season. At midnight on Midsummer Eve the

QUAINT CUSTOMS

plant is supposed to bloom and soon afterwards to seed; and whoever catches the bloom or the seed is thereby endowed with supernatural knowledge and miraculous powers; above all, he knows where treasures lie hidden in the ground, and he can render himself invisible at will by putting the seed in his shoe. But great precautions must be observed in procuring the wondrous bloom or seed, which else quickly vanishes like dew on sand or mist in the air. The seeker must neither touch it with his hand nor let it touch the ground; he spreads a white cloth under the plant, and the blossom or the seed falls into it.

THE MAGIC FLOWERS AT MIDSUMMER EVE

THE SPRINGWORT AND THE WOODPECKER THE WHITE CHICORY

In the Harz Mountains they say that many years ago there was a wondrous flower called springwort or Johnswort, which was as rare as it was marvellous. It bloomed only on St. John's Night (some say under a fern) between the hours of eleven and twelve; but when the last stroke of twelve was struck, the flower vanished away. Only in mountainous regions, where many noble metals reposed in the bosom of the earth, was the flower seen now and then in lonely meadows among the hills. The spirits of the hills wished by means of it to show to men where their treasures were to be found. The flower itself was

MAGIC FLOWERS AT MIDSUMMER EVE

yellow and shone like a lamp in the darkness of night. It never stood still, but kept hopping constantly to and fro. It was also afraid of men and fled before them, and no man ever yet plucked it unless he had been set apart by Providence for the task. To him who was lucky enough to cull it the flower revealed all the treasures of the earth, and it made him rich, oh so rich and so happy!

You mark a hollow in a tree where a green or black woodpecker has built its nest and hatched its young; you plug up the hole with a wooden wedge; then you hide behind the tree and wait. The woodpecker meantime has flown away, but very soon returns with the springwort in its bill. It flutters up to the tree-trunk holding the springwort to the wedge, which at once, as if struck by a hammer, jumps out with a bang. Now is your chance. You rush from your concealment, you raise a loud cry, and in its fright the bird opens its bill and drops the springwort. Quick as thought you reach out a red or white cloth, with which you have taken care to provide yourself, and catch the magic flower as it falls. The treasure is now yours. Before its marvellous power all doors and locks fly open; it can make the bearer of it invisible; and neither steel nor lead can wound the man who carries it in the right-hand pocket of his coat. The superstition which associates the springwort with the woodpecker is very ancient, for it is recorded by Pliny. It was a vulgar belief, he tells us, that if a shepherd plugged up a woodpecker's nest in the hollow of a tree with a wedge, the bird would bring a herb which caused

QUAINT CUSTOMS

the wedge to slip out of the hole. Another flower which possesses the same remarkable power of bursting open all doors and locks is chicory, provided always that you cut the flower with a piece of gold at noon or midnight on St. James's Day, the twenty-fifth of July. But in cutting it you must be perfectly silent; if you utter a sound, it is all up with you. There was a man who was just about to cut the flower of the chicory, when he looked up and saw a millstone hovering over his head. He fled for his life and fortunately escaped; but had he so much as opened his lips, the millstone would have dropped on him and crushed him as flat as a pancake. However, it is only a rare white variety of the chicory flower which can act as a picklock; the common bright blue flower is perfectly useless for the purpose.

SAWING THE OLD WOMAN

Among the gypsies of South-eastern Europe the custom of "sawing the Old Woman in two" is observed in a very graphic form, not at Mid-Lent, but on the afternoon of Palm Sunday. The Old Woman, represented by a puppet of straw dressed in women's clothes, is laid across a beam in some open place and beaten with clubs by the assembled gypsies, after which it is sawn in two by a young man and a maiden, both of whom wear a disguise. While the effigy is being sawn through, the rest of the company dance round it singing songs of

SAWING THE OLD WOMAN

various sorts. The remains of the figure are finally burnt, and the ashes thrown into a stream. The ceremony is supposed by the gypsies themselves to be observed in honour of a certain Shadow Queen; hence Palm Sunday goes by the name Shadow Day among all the strolling gypsies of Eastern and Southern Europe. According to the popular belief, this Shadow Queen, of whom the gypsies of to-day have only a very vague and confused conception, vanishes underground at the appearance of spring, but comes forth again at the beginning of winter to plague mankind during that inclement season with sickness, hunger, and death. Among the vagrant gypsies of southern Hungary the effigy is regarded as an expiatory and thank offering made to the Shadow Queen for having spared the people during the winter. In Transylvania the gypsies who live in tents clothe the puppet in the cast-off garments of the woman who has last become a widow. The widow herself gives the clothes gladly for this purpose, because she thinks that being burnt they will pass into the possession of her departed husband, who will thus have no excuse for returning from the spirit-land to visit her. The ashes are thrown by the Transylvanian gypsies on the first graveyard that they pass on their journey.

QUAINT CUSTOMS

“ SEIZE THE OLD MAN ”

In modern Europe the person who cuts or binds or threshes the last sheaf is often exposed to rough treatment at the hands of his fellow-labourers. For example, he is bound up in the last sheaf, and, thus encased, is carried or carted about, beaten, drenched with water, thrown on a dunghill, and so forth. Or, if he is spared this horseplay, he is at least the subject of ridicule or is thought to be destined to suffer some misfortune in the course of the year. Hence the harvesters are naturally reluctant to give the last cut at reaping or the last stroke at threshing or to bind the last sheaf, and towards the close of the work this reluctance produces an emulation among the labourers, each striving to finish his task as fast as possible, in order that he may escape the invidious distinction of being last. In the neighbourhood of Danzig, when the winter corn is cut and mostly bound up in sheaves, the portion which still remains to be bound is divided amongst the women binders, each of whom receives a swath of equal length to bind. A crowd of reapers, children, and idlers gather round to witness the contest, and at the word, “ Seize the Old Man,” the women fall to work, all binding their allotted swaths as hard as they can. The spectators watch them narrowly, and the woman who cannot keep pace with the rest and consequently binds the last sheaf has to carry the Old Man (that is, the last sheaf made up in the form of a man) to the farmhouse and deliver it to

“SEIZE THE OLD MAN”

the farmer with the words, “ Here I bring you the Old Man.” At the supper which follows, the Old Man is placed at the table and receives an abundant portion of food, which, as he cannot eat it, falls to the share of the woman who carried him. Afterwards the Old Man is placed in the yard and all the people dance round him. Or the woman who bound the last sheaf dances for a good while with the Old Man, while the rest form a ring round them; afterwards they all, one after the other, dance a single round with him. Further, the woman who bound the last sheaf goes herself by the name of the Old Man till the next harvest, and is often mocked with the cry, “ Here comes the Old Man.” In the Mittelmark district of Prussia, when the rye has been reaped, and the last sheaves are about to be tied up, the binders stand in two rows facing each other, every woman with her sheaf and her straw rope before her. At a given signal they all tie up their sheaves, and the one who is the last to finish is ridiculed by the rest. Not only so, but her sheaf is made up into human shape and called the Old Man, and she must carry it home to the farmyard, where the harvesters dance in a circle round her and it. Then they take the Old Man to the farmer and deliver it to him with the words, “ We bring the Old Man to the Master. He may keep him till he gets a new one.” After that the Old Man is set up against a tree, where he remains for a long time, the butt of many jests. At Aschbach in Bavaria, when the reaping is nearly finished, the reapers say, “ Now, we will drive out the Old Man.” Each of

QUAINT CUSTOMS

them sets himself to reap a patch of corn as fast as he can; he who cuts the last handful or the last stalk is greeted by the rest with an exulting cry, "You have the Old Man." Sometimes a black mask is fastened on the reaper's face and he is dressed in woman's clothes; or if the reaper is a woman, she is dressed in man's clothes. A dance follows. At the supper the Old Man gets twice as large a portion of food as the others. The proceedings are similar at threshing; the person who gives the last stroke is said to have the Old Man. At the supper given to the threshers he has to eat out of the cream-ladle and to drink a great deal. Moreover, he is quizzed and teased in all sorts of ways till he frees himself from further annoyance by treating the others to brandy or beer.

Near Stettin the harvesters call out to the woman who binds the last sheaf, "You have the Old Man, and must keep him." The Old Man is a great bundle of corn decked with flowers and ribbons, and fashioned into a rude semblance of the human form. It is fastened on a rake or strapped on a horse, and brought with music to the village. In delivering the Old Man to the farmer, the woman says:

"Here, dear Sir, is the Old Man.
He can stay no longer on the field,
He can hide himself no longer,
He must come into the village.
Ladies and gentlemen, pray be so kind
As to give the Old Man a present."

As late as the last half of the nineteenth century

“SEIZE THE OLD MAN”

the custom was to tie up the woman herself in pease-straw, and bring her with music to the farmhouse, where the harvesters danced with her till the pease-straw fell off. In other villages round Stettin, when the last harvest-waggon is being loaded, there is a regular race amongst the women, each striving not to be last. For she who places the last sheaf on the waggon is called the Old Man, and is completely swathed in corn-stalks; she is also decked with flowers, and flowers and a helmet of straw are placed on her head. In solemn procession she carries the harvest-crown to the squire, over whose head she holds it while she utters a string of good wishes. At the dance which follows, the Old Man has the right to choose his, or rather her, partner; it is an honour to dance with him. In the district of Potsdam, the woman who binds the last sheaf at the rye-harvest is saluted with the cry, “You have the Old Man.” A woman is then tied up in the last sheaf in such a way that only her head is left free; her hair also is covered with a cap made of rye-stalks, adorned with ribbons and flowers. She is called the Harvest-man, and must keep dancing in front of the last harvest-waggon till it reaches the squire’s house, where she receives a present and is released from her envelope of corn.

“In all these cases the idea is that the spirit of the corn—the Old Man of vegetation—is driven out of the corn last cut or last threshed, and lives in the barn during the winter. At sowing-time he goes out again to the fields to resume his activity as animating force among the sprouting corn.”

QUAINT CUSTOMS

CARNIVAL BURNT

At Frosinone, in Latium, about half-way between Rome and Naples, the dull monotony of life in a provincial Italian town is agreeably broken on the last day of the Carnival by the ancient festival known as the *Radica*. About four o'clock in the afternoon the town band, playing lively tunes and followed by a great crowd, proceeds to the Piazza del Plebiscito, where is the Sub-Prefecture as well as the rest of the Government buildings. Here, in the middle of the square, the eyes of the expectant multitude are greeted by the sight of an immense car decked with many-coloured festoons and drawn by four horses. Mounted on the car is a huge chair, on which sits enthroned the majestic figure of the Carnival, a man of stucco about nine feet high with a rubicund and smiling countenance. Enormous boots, a tin helmet like those which grace the heads of officers of the Italian marine, and a coat of many colours embellished with strange devices, adorn the outward man of this stately personage. His left hand rests on the arm of the chair, while with his right he gracefully salutes the crowd, being moved to this act of civility by a string which is pulled by a man who modestly shrinks from publicity under the mercy-seat. And now the crowd, surging excitedly round the car, gives vent to its feelings in wild cries of joy, gentle and simple being mixed up together and all dancing furiously the *Saltarello*. A special feature of the festival is

CARNIVAL BURNT

that every one must carry in his hand what is called a *radica* ("root"), by which is meant a huge leaf of the aloe or rather the agave. Any one who ventured into the crowd without such a leaf would be unceremoniously hustled out of it, unless indeed he bore as a substitute a large cabbage at the end of a long stick or a bunch of grass curiously plaited. When the multitude, after a short turn, has escorted the slow-moving car to the gate of the Sub-Prefecture, they halt, and the car, jolting over the uneven ground, rumbles into the courtyard. A hush now falls on the crowd, their subdued voices sounding, according to the description of one who has heard them, like the murmur of a troubled sea. All eyes are turned anxiously to the door from which the Sub-Prefect himself and the other representatives of the majesty of the law are expected to issue and pay their homage to the hero of the hour. A few moments of suspense and then a storm of cheers and hand-clapping salutes the appearance of the dignitaries, as they file out and, descending the staircase, take their place in the procession. The hymn of the Carnival is now thundered out, after which, amid a deafening roar, aloe leaves and cabbages are whirled aloft and descend impartially on the heads of the just and the unjust, who lend fresh zest to the proceedings by engaging in a free fight. When these preliminaries have been concluded to the satisfaction of all concerned, the procession gets under weigh. The rear is brought up by a cart laden with barrels of wine and policemen, the latter engaged in the congenial task of

QUAINT CUSTOMS

serving out wine to all who ask for it, while a most internecine struggle, accompanied by a copious discharge of yells, blows, and blasphemy, goes on among the surging crowd at the cart's tail in their anxiety not to miss the glorious opportunity of intoxicating themselves at the public expense. Finally, after the procession has paraded the principal streets in this majestic manner, the effigy of Carnival is taken to the middle of a public square, stripped of his finery, laid on a pile of wood, and burnt amid the cries of the multitude, who, thundering out once more the song of the Carnival, fling their so-called "roots" on the pyre and give themselves up without restraint to the pleasures of the dance.

CARNIVAL OF LERIDA

At Lerida, in Catalonia, the funeral of the Carnival was witnessed by an English traveller in 1877. On the last Sunday of the Carnival a grand procession of infantry, cavalry, and maskers of many sorts, some on horseback and some in carriages, escorted the grand car of His Grace Pau Pi, as the effigy was called, in triumph through the principal streets. For three days the revelry ran high, and then at midnight on the last day of the Carnival the same procession again wound through the streets, but under a different aspect and for a different end. The triumphal car was exchanged for a hearse, in which reposed the effigy of his dead Grace: a troop of maskers, who in the first procession had played

CARNIVAL OF LERIDA

the part of Students of Folly with many a merry quip and jest, now, robed as priests and bishops, paced slowly along holding aloft huge lighted tapers and singing a dirge. All the mummers wore crape, and all the horsemen carried blazing flambeaux. Down the high street, between the lofty, many-storeyed and balconied houses, where every window, every balcony, every housetop was crammed with a dense mass of spectators, all dressed and masked in fantastic gorgeousness, the procession took its melancholy way. Over the scene flashed and played the shifting cross-lights and shadows from the moving torches: red and blue Bengal lights flared up and died out again; and above the trampling of the horses and the measured tread of the marching multitude rose the voices of the priests chanting the requiem, while the military bands struck in with the solemn roll of the muffled drums. On reaching the principal square the procession halted, a burlesque funeral oration was pronounced over the defunct Pau Pi, and the lights were extinguished. Immediately the devil and his angels darted from the crowd, seized the body and fled away with it, hotly pursued by the whole multitude, yelling, screaming, and cheering. Naturally the fiends were overtaken and dispersed; and the sham corpse, rescued from their clutches, was laid in a grave that had been made ready for its reception. Thus the Carnival of 1877 at Lerida died and was buried.



QUAINT CUSTOMS

THE CARNIVAL OF VIZA

The drama, which may reasonably be regarded as a direct descendant of the Dionysiac rites, is usually performed at the Carnival in all the Christian villages which cluster round Viza, the ancient Bizya, a town of Thrace situated about midway between Adrianople and Constantinople. In antiquity the city was the capital of the Thracian tribe of the Asti; the kings had their palace there, probably in the acropolis, of which some fine walls are still standing. Inscriptions preserved in the modern town record the names of some of these old kings. The date of the celebration is Cheese Monday, as it is locally called, which is the Monday of the last week of Carnival. The principal parts in the drama are taken by two men disguised in goatskins. Each of them wears a headdress made of a complete goatskin, which is stuffed so as to rise a foot or more like a shako over his head, while the skin falls over the face, forming a mask with holes cut for the eyes and mouth. Their shoulders are thickly padded with hay to protect them from the blows which used to be rained very liberally on their backs. Fawn-skins on their shoulders and goatskins on their legs are or used to be part of their equipment, and another indispensable part of it is a number of sheep-bells tied round their waists. One of the two skin-clad actors carries a bow and the other a wooden effigy. Both these actors must be married men. Two unmarried boys dressed as girls and

THE CARNIVAL OF VIZA

sometimes called brides also take part in the play; and a man disguised as an old woman in rags carries a mock baby in a basket; the brat is supposed to be a seven-months' child. The basket in which the hopeful infant is paraded bears the ancient name of the winnowing-fan, and the babe itself receives the very title, "He of the Winnowing-fan," which in antiquity was applied to Dionysus. Two other actors, clad in rags with blackened faces and armed with stout saplings, play the parts of a gypsy-man and his wife; others personate policemen armed with swords and whips; and the troupe is completed by a man who discourses music on a bagpipe.

Such are the masqueraders. The morning of the day on which they perform their little drama is spent by them going from door to door collecting bread, eggs, or money. At every door the two skin-clad maskers knock, the boys disguised as girls dance, and the gypsy man and wife enact a pantomime on the straw-heap before the house. When every house in the village has been thus visited, the troop takes up position on the open space before the village church, where the whole population has already mustered to witness the performance. After a dance hand in hand, in which all the actors take part, the two skin-clad maskers withdraw and leave the field to the gypsies, who now pretend to forge a ploughshare, the man making believe to hammer the share and his wife to work the bellows. At this point the old woman's baby is supposed to grow up at a great pace, to develop a huge appetite for meat and drink, and to clamour for a wife. One of the

QUAINT CUSTOMS

skin-clad men now pursues one of the two pretended brides, and a mock marriage is celebrated between the couple. After these nuptials have been performed with a parody of a real wedding, the mock bridegroom is shot by his comrade with the bow and falls down on his face like dead. His slayer thereupon feigns to skin him with a knife; but the dead man's wife laments over her deceased husband with loud cries, throwing herself across his prostrate body. In this lamentation the slayer himself and all the other actors join in: a funeral service is burlesqued, and the pretended corpse is lifted up as if to be carried to the grave. At this point, however, the dead man disconcerts the preparations for his burial by suddenly coming to life again and getting up. So ends the drama of death and resurrection.

The next act opens with a repetition of the pretence of forging a ploughshare, but this time the gypsy man hammers on a real share. When the implement is supposed to have been fashioned, a real plough is brought forward, the mockery appears to cease, the two boys dressed as girls are yoked to the plough and drag it twice round the village square contrary to the way of the sun. One of the two skin-clad men walks at the tail of the plough, the other guides it in front, and a third man follows in the rear scattering seed from a basket. After the two rounds have been completed, the gypsy and his wife are yoked to the plough, and drag it a third time round the square, the two skin-clad men still playing the part of ploughmen. At Viza the plough is drawn by the skin-clad men

BATTLE OF SUMMER AND WINTER

themselves. While the plough is going its rounds, followed by the sower sowing the seed, the people pray aloud, saying, "May wheat be ten piastres the bushel! Rye five piastres the bushel! Amen, O that the poor may eat! Yea, O that poor folk be filled!" This ends the performance. The evening is spent in feasting on the proceeds of the house-to-house visitation which took place in the morning.

BATTLE OF SUMMER AND WINTER

Sometimes in the popular customs of the peasantry the contrast between the dormant powers of vegetation in winter and their awakening vitality in spring takes the form of a dramatic contest between actors who play the parts respectively of Winter and Summer. Thus in the towns of Sweden on May Day two troops of young men on horseback used to meet as if for mortal combat. One of them was led by a representative of Winter clad in furs, who threw snowballs and ice in order to prolong the cold weather. The other troop was commanded by a representative of Summer covered with fresh leaves and flowers. In the sham fight which followed the party of Summer came off victorious, and the ceremony ended with a feast. Again, in the region of the middle Rhine, a representative of Summer clad in ivy combats a representative of Winter clad in straw or moss and finally gains a victory over him. The vanquished foe is

QUAINT CUSTOMS

thrown to the ground and stripped of his casing of straw, which is torn to pieces and scattered about, while the youthful comrades of the two champions sing a song to commemorate the defeat of Winter by Summer. Afterwards they carry about a summer garland or branch and collect gifts of eggs and bacon from house to house. Sometimes the champion who acts the part of Summer is dressed in leaves and flowers, and wears a chaplet of flowers on his head. In the Palatinate this mimic conflict takes place on the fourth Sunday in Lent. All over Bavaria the same drama used to be acted on the same day, and it was still kept up in some places down to the middle of the nineteenth century or later. While Summer appeared clad all in green, decked with fluttering ribbons, and carrying a branch in blossom or a little tree hung with apples and pears, Winter was muffled up in cap and mantle of fur and bore in his hand a snow-shovel or a flail. Accompanied by their respective retinues dressed in corresponding attire, they went through all the streets of the village, halting before the houses and singing staves of old songs, for which they received presents of bread, eggs, and fruit. Finally, after a short struggle, Winter was beaten by Summer and ducked in the village well or driven out of the village with shouts and laughter into the forest. In some parts of Bavaria the boys who play the parts of Winter and Summer act their little drama in every house that they visit, and engage in a war of words before they come to blows, each of them vaunting the pleasures and benefits of the season he represents

BATTLE OF SUMMER AND WINTER

and disparaging those of the other. The dialogue is in verse. A few couplets may serve as specimens:

SUMMER

“Green, green are meadows wherever I pass,
And the mowers are busy among the grass.”

WINTER

“White, white are the meadows wherever I go,
And the sledges glide hissing across the snow.”

SUMMER

“I’ll climb up the tree where the red cherries glow,
And Winter can stand by himself down below.”

WINTER

“With you I will climb the cherry-tree tall,
Its branches will kindle the fire in the hall.”

SUMMER

“O Winter, you are most uncivil
To send old women to the devil.”

WINTER

“By that I make them warm and mellow,
So let them bawl and let them bellow.”

SUMMER

“I am the Summer in white array,
I’m chasing the Winter far, far away.”

WINTER

“I am the Winter in mantle of furs,
I’m chasing the Summer o’er bushes and burs.”

SUMMER

“Just say a word more, and I’ll have you bann’d
At once and for ever from Summer land.”

QUAINT CUSTOMS

WINTER

“O Summer, for all your bluster and brag,
You’d not dare to carry a hen in a bag.”

SUMMER

“O Winter, your chatter no more can I stay,
I’ll kick and I’ll cuff you without delay.”

Here ensues a scuffle between the two little boys, in which Summer gets the best of it, and turns Winter out of the house. But soon the beaten champion of Winter peeps in at the door and says with a humbled and crestfallen air:

“O Summer, dear Summer, I’m under your ban,
For you are the master and I am the man.”

To which Summer replies:

“’Tis a capital notion, an excellent plan,
If I am the master and you are the man,
So come, my dear Winter, and give me your hand,
We’ll travel together to Summer Land.”

QUEEN OF WINTER AND QUEEN OF MAY

On May Day it used to be customary in almost all the large parishes of the Isle of Man to choose from among the daughters of the wealthiest farmers a young maiden to be Queen of May. She was dressed in the gayest attire and attended by about twenty others, who were called maids of honour. She had also a young man for her captain with a number of inferior officers under him. In opposition

QUEENS OF WINTER AND MAY

to her was the Queen of Winter, a man attired as a woman, with woollen hoods, fur tippets, and loaded with the warmest and heaviest clothes, one upon another. Her attendants were habited in like manner, and she too had a captain and troop for her defence. Thus representing respectively the beauty of spring and the deformity of winter they set forth from their different quarters, the one preceded by the dulcet music of flutes and violins, the other by the harsh clatter of cleavers and tongs. In this array they marched till they met on a common, where the trains of the two mimic sovereigns engaged in a mock battle. If the Queen of Winter's forces got the better of their adversaries and took her rival prisoner, the captive Queen of May was ransomed for as much as would pay the expenses of the festival. After this ceremony, Winter and her company retired and diverted themselves in a barn, while the partisans of Summer danced on the green, concluding the evening with a feast, at which the Queen and her maids sat at one table and the captain and his troop at another. In later times the person of the Queen of May was exempt from capture, but one of her slippers was substituted and, if captured, had to be ransomed to defray the expenses of the pageant. The procession of the Summer, which was subsequently composed of little girls and called the Maceboard, outlived that of its rival the Winter for some years; but both have now long been things of the past.

QUAINT CUSTOMS

MOCK BEHEADING OF THE KING ON WHIT-MONDAY

In Semic (Bohemia) the custom of beheading the King is observed on Whit-Monday. A troop of young people disguise themselves; each is girt with a girdle of bark and carries a wooden sword and a trumpet of willow-bark. The King wears a robe of tree-bark adorned with flowers, on his head is a crown of bark decked with flowers and branches, his feet are wound about with ferns, a mask hides his face, and for a sceptre he has a hawthorn switch in his hand. A lad leads him through the village by a rope fastened to his foot, while the rest dance about, blow their trumpets, and whistle. In every farmhouse the King is chased round the room, and one of the troop, amid much noise and outcry, strikes with his sword a blow on the King's robe of bark till it rings again. Then a gratuity is demanded. The ceremony of decapitation, which is here somewhat slurred over, is carried out with a greater semblance of reality in other parts of Bohemia. Thus in some villages of the Königgrätz district on Whit-Monday the girls assemble under one lime-tree and the young men under another, all dressed in their best and tricked out with ribbons. The young men twine a garland for the Queen, and the girls another for the King. When they have chosen the King and Queen they all go in procession, two and two, to the ale-house, from the balcony of which the crier proclaims the names of the King

THE MAGIC SPRING

and Queen. Both are then invested with the insignia of their office and are crowned with the garlands, while the music plays up. Then some one gets on a bench and accuses the King of various offences, such as ill-treating the cattle. The King appeals to witnesses and a trial ensues, at the close of which the judge, who carries a white wand as his badge of office, pronounces a verdict of "Guilty" or "Not guilty." If the verdict is "Guilty," the judge breaks his wand, the King kneels on a white cloth, all heads are bared, and a soldier sets three or four hats, one above the other, on his Majesty's head. The judge then pronounces the word "Guilty" thrice in a loud voice, and orders the crier to behead the King. The crier obeys by striking off the King's hats with his wooden sword.

THE MAGIC SPRING

Led astray by his ignorance of the true causes of things, primitive man believed that in order to produce the great phenomena of nature on which his life depended he had only to imitate them, and that immediately by a secret sympathy or mystic influence the little drama which he acted in forest glade or mountain dell, on desert plain or wind-swept shore, would be taken up and repeated by mightier actors on a vaster stage. He fancied that by masquerading in leaves and flowers he helped the bare earth to clothe herself with verdure, and that by playing the death and burial of winter he drove

QUAINT CUSTOMS

that gloomy season away, and made smooth the path for the footsteps of returning spring. If we find it hard to throw ourselves even in fancy into a mental condition in which such things seem possible, we can more easily picture to ourselves the anxiety which the savage, when he first began to lift his thoughts above the satisfaction of his merely animal wants, and to meditate on the causes of things, may have felt as to the continued operation of what we now call the laws of nature. To us, familiar as we are with the conception of the uniformity and regularity with which the great cosmic phenomena succeed each other, there seems little ground for apprehension that the causes which produce these effects will cease to operate, at least within the near future. But this confidence in the stability of nature is bred only by the experience which comes of wide observation and long tradition; and the savage, with his narrow sphere of observation and his short-lived tradition, lacks the very elements of that experience which alone could set his mind at rest in face of the ever-changing and often menacing aspects of nature. No wonder, therefore, that he is thrown into a panic by an eclipse, and thinks that the sun or the moon would surely perish if he did not raise a clamour and shoot his puny shafts into the air to defend the luminaries from the monster who threatens to devour them. No wonder he is terrified when in the darkness of night a streak of sky is suddenly illumined by the flash of a meteor, or the whole expanse of the celestial arch glows with the fitful light of the Northern Streamers. Even

THE MAGIC SPRING

phenomena which recur at fixed and uniform intervals may be viewed by him with apprehension, before he has come to recognize the orderliness of their recurrence. The speed or slowness of his recognition of such periodic or cyclic changes in nature will depend largely on the length of the particular cycle. The cycle, for example, of day and night is everywhere, except in the polar regions, so short and hence so frequent that men probably soon ceased to discompose themselves seriously as to the chance of its failing to recur, though the ancient Egyptians daily wrought enchantments to bring back to the east in the morning the fiery orb which had sunk at evening in the crimson west. But it was far otherwise with the annual cycle of the seasons. To any man a year is a considerable period, seeing that the number of our years is but few at the best. To the primitive savage, with his short memory and imperfect means of marking the flight of time, a year may well have been so long that he failed to recognize it as a cycle at all, and watched the changing aspects of earth and heaven with a perpetual wonder, alternately delighted and alarmed, elated and cast down, according as the vicissitudes of light and heat, of plant and animal life, ministered to his comfort or threatened his existence. In autumn when the withered leaves were whirled about the forest by the nipping blast, and he looked up at the bare boughs, could he feel sure that they would ever be green again? As day by day the sun sank lower and lower in the sky, could he be certain that the luminary would ever

QUAINT CUSTOMS

retrace his heavenly road? Even the waning moon, whose pale sickle rose thinner and thinner every night over the rim of the eastern horizon, may have excited in his mind a fear lest, when it had wholly vanished, there should be moons no more.

These and a thousand such misgivings may have thronged the fancy and troubled the peace of the man who first began to reflect on the mysteries of the world he lived in, and to take thought for a more distant future than the morrow. It was natural, therefore, that with such thoughts and fears he should have done all that in him lay to bring back the faded blossom to the bough, to swing the low sun of winter up to his old place in the summer sky, and to restore its orb'd fullness to the silver lamp of the waning moon. We may smile at his vain endeavours if we please, but it was only by making a long series of experiments, of which some were almost inevitably doomed to failure, that man learned from experience the futility of some of his attempted methods and the fruitfulness of others. After all, magical ceremonies are nothing but experiments which have failed and which continue to be repeated merely because, for reasons which have already been indicated, the operator is unaware of their failure. With the advance of knowledge these ceremonies either cease to be performed altogether or are kept up from force of habit long after the intention with which they were instituted has been forgotten. Thus fallen from their high estate, no longer regarded as solemn rites on the punctual performance of which the welfare and

THE MAGIC SPRING

even the life of the community depend, they sink gradually to the level of simple pageants, mummeries, and pastimes, till in the final stage of degeneration they are wholly abandoned by older people, and, from having once been the most serious occupation of the sage, become at last the idle sport of children. It is in this final stage of decay that most of the old magical rites of our European forefathers linger on at the present day, and even from this their last retreat they are fast being swept away by the rising tide of those multitudinous forces, moral, intellectual, and social, which are bearing mankind onward to a new and unknown goal. We may feel some natural regret at the disappearance of quaint customs and picturesque ceremonies, which have preserved to an age often deemed dull and prosaic something of the flavour and freshness of the olden time, some breath of the springtime of the world; yet our regret will be lessened when we remember that these pretty pageants, these now innocent diversions, had their origin in ignorance and superstition; that if they are a record of human endeavour, they are also a monument of fruitless ingenuity, of wasted labour, and of blighted hopes; and that for all their gay trappings—their flowers, their ribbons, and their music—they partake far more of tragedy than of farce.

QUAINT CUSTOMS

CANDLES LIGHTED TO KEEP OFF THE WITCHES

Witches in Lancashire used to gather on Hallowe'en at the Malkin Tower, a ruined and desolate farmhouse in the forest of Pendle. They assembled for no good purpose; but you could keep the infernal rout at bay by carrying a lighted candle about the fells from eleven to twelve o'clock at night. The witches tried to blow out the candle, and if they succeeded, so much the worse for you; but if the flame burned steadily till the clocks had struck midnight, you were safe. Some people performed the ceremony by deputy; and parties went about from house to house in the evening collecting candles, one for each inmate, and offering their services to *late* or *leet* the witches, as the phrase ran. This custom was practised at Longridge Fell in the early part of the nineteenth century.

THE PIGS OF THE PARSON'S WIFE

In the summer of 1828 there was much sickness among the pigs and the cows of Eddesse, a village near Meinersen, in the south of Hanover. When all ordinary measures to arrest the malady failed, the farmers met in solemn conclave on the village green and determined that next morning there should be a need-fire (a solemn fire-festival). Thereupon the

THE PIGS OF THE PARSON'S WIFE

head man of the village sent word from house to house that on the following day nobody should kindle a fire before sunrise, and that everybody should stand by ready to drive out the cattle. The same afternoon all the necessary preparations were made for giving effect to the decision of the collective wisdom. A narrow street was enclosed with planks, and the village carpenter set to work at the machinery for kindling the fire. He took two posts of oak wood, bored a hole about three inches deep and broad in each, and set the two poles up facing each other at a distance of about two feet. Then he fitted a roller of oak wood into the two holes of the posts, so that it formed a cross-piece between them. About two o'clock next morning every householder brought a bundle of straw and brushwood and laid it down across the street in a prescribed order. The sturdiest swains who could be found were chosen to make the need-fire. For this purpose a long hempen rope was wound twice round the oaken roller in the oaken posts: the pivots were well smeared with pitch and tar: a bundle of tow and other tinder was laid close at hand, and all was ready. The stalwart clodhoppers now seized the two ends of the rope and went to work with a will. Puffs of smoke soon issued from the sockets, but to the consternation of the bystanders not a spark of fire could be elicited. Some people openly declared their suspicion that some rascal had not put out the fire in his house, when suddenly the timber burst into flame. The cloud passed away from all faces; the fire was applied to

QUAINT CUSTOMS

the heaps of fuel, and when the flames had somewhat died down, the herds were forcibly driven through the fire, first the pigs, next the cows, and last of all the horses. The herdsmen then drove the beasts to pasture, and persons whose faith in the efficacy of the need-fire was particularly robust carried home brands.

Again, at a village near Quedlinburg, in the Harz Mountains, it was resolved to put a herd of sick swine through the need-fire. Hearing of this intention the Superintendent of Quedlinburg hurried to the spot and has described for us what he saw. The beadles went from house to house to see that there was no fire in any house; for it is well known that should there be common fire burning in a house the need-fire will not kindle. The men made their rounds very early in the morning to make quite sure that all lights were out. At two o'clock a night-light was still burning in the parsonage, and this was of course a hindrance to the need-fire. The peasants knocked at the window and earnestly entreated that the night-light might be extinguished. But the parson's wife refused to put the light out; it still glimmered at the window; and in the darkness outside the angry rustics vowed that the parson's pigs should get no benefit of the need-fire. However, as good luck would have it, just as the morning broke, the night-light went out of itself, and the hopes of the people revived. From every house bundles of straw, tow, faggots, and so forth were now carried to feed the bonfire. The noise and the cheerful bustle were such that you



*"The herds were forcibly
driven through the fire"*
• THE PIGS of the PARSON'S WIFE •

THE PIGS OF THE PARSON'S WIFE

might have thought they were all hurrying to witness a public execution. Outside the village, between two garden walls, an oaken post had been driven into the ground and a hole bored through it. In the hole a wooden winch, smeared with tar, was inserted and made to revolve with such force and rapidity that fire and smoke in time issued from the socket. The collected fuel was then thrown upon the fire and soon a great blaze shot up. The pigs were now driven into the upper end of the street. As soon as they saw the fire, they turned tail, but the peasants drove them through with shrieks and shouts and lashes of whips. At the other end of the street there was another crowd waiting, who chased the swine back through the fire a second time. Then the other crowd repeated the manœuvre, and the herd of swine was driven for the third time through the smoke and flames. That was the end of the performance. Many pigs were scorched so severely that they gave up the ghost. The bonfire was broken up, and every householder took home with him a brand, which he washed in the water-barrel and laid for some time, as a treasure of great price, in the manger from which the cattle were fed. But the parson's wife had reason bitterly to repent her folly in refusing to put out that night-light; for not one of her pigs was driven through the need-fire, so they died.

QUAINT CUSTOMS

DIVINING RODS

People have fancied that if they cut a branch of hazel on Midsummer Eve it would serve them as a divining rod to discover treasures and water. They say that if you would procure the mystic wand you must go to the hazel by night on Midsummer Eve, walking backwards, and when you have come to the bush you must silently put your hands between your legs and cut a fork-shaped stick; that stick will be the divining rod, and, as such, will detect treasures buried in the ground. If you have any doubt as to the quality of the wand, you have only to hold it in water; for in that case your true divining rod will squeak like a pig, but your spurious one will not. The divining rod should be cut from a hazel bush between eleven and twelve on St. John's Night; by means of it you can discover not only veins of metal and underground springs, but also thieves and murderers and unknown ways. In cutting it you should say, "God greet thee, thou noble twig! I adjure thee, rod and sprig, by the highest powers, that thou shew me what I order." In Berlin and the neighbourhood they say that every seventh year there grows a wonderful branch on a hazel bush, and that branch is the divining rod. Only a child born on a Sunday and nursed in the true faith can find it on St. John's Night; to him then all the treasures of the earth lie open. In the Tyrol the divining rod ought to be cut at new moon, but may be cut either on St. John's Day or

BABY IN THE WINNOWING BASKET

on Twelfth Night. Having got it you baptize it in the name of one of the Three Holy Kings according to the purpose for which you intend to use it: if the rod is to discover gold, you name it Caspar; if it is to reveal silver, you call it Balthasar; and if it is to point out hidden springs of water, you dub it Melchior.

THE BABY IN THE WINNOWING BASKET

In Java it is, or used to be, customary to place every child at birth in a bamboo basket like the sieve or winnowing-basket which Javanese farmers use for separating the rice from the chaff. It is the nurse who places the child in the basket, and as she does so she suddenly knocks with the palms of both hands on the basket in order that the child may not be timid and fearful. Then she addresses the child thus: "Cry not, for Njai-among and Kaki-among [two spirits] are watching over you." Next she addresses these two spirits, saying, "Bring not your grandchild to the road, lest he be trampled by a horse; bring him not to the bank of the river, lest he fall into the river." The object of the ceremony is said to be that these two spirits should always and everywhere guard the child. On the first anniversary of a child's birthday the Chinese of Foo-Chow set the little one in a large bamboo sieve, such as farmers employ in winnowing grain, and in the sieve they place along with the child a variety of articles, such as fruits, gold or silver ornaments, a set of money-scales, books, a pencil, pen, ink,

QUAINT CUSTOMS

paper, and so on, and they draw omens of the child's future career from the object which it first handles and plays with. Thus, if the infant first grasps the money-scale, he will be wealthy; if he seizes on a book, he will be learned, and so forth. In the Bilaspore district of India it is customary for well-to-do people to place a new-born infant in a winnowing-fan filled with rice, and afterwards to give the grain to the nurse in attendance. In Upper Egypt a newly-born babe is immediately laid upon a corn-sieve and corn is scattered around it; moreover, on the seventh day after birth the infant is carried on a sieve through the whole house, while the nurse scatters wheat, barley, pease, and salt. The intention of these ceremonies is said to be to avert evil spirits from the child, and a like motive is assigned by other peoples for the practice of placing new-born infants in a winnowing-basket or corn-sieve. For example, in the Punjaub, when several children of a family have died in succession, a new baby will sometimes be put at birth into an old winnowing-basket along with the sweepings of the house, and so dragged out into the yard; such a child may, like Dionysus, in after life be known by the name of Winnowing-basket or Dragged. The object of treating the child in this way seems to be to save its life by deceiving the spirits, who are supposed to have carried off its elder brothers and sisters; these malevolent beings are on the look-out for the new baby, but they will never think of raking for it in the dust-bin, that being the last place where they would expect to find the hope of the family.

SPINNING TOPS AND MASQUERADES

SPINNING TOPS AND MASQUERADES

During the seclusion and rest imposed on them by the sowing festivals the Kayans employ themselves in various pursuits, which, though at first sight they might seem to serve no other purpose than that of recreation, have really in the minds of the people a much deeper significance. For example, at this time the men often play at spinning tops. The tops are smooth, flat pieces of wood weighing several pounds. Each man tries to spin his own top so that it knocks down those of his neighbours and continues itself to revolve triumphantly. New tops are commonly carved for the festival. The older men sometimes use heavy tops of iron-wood. Again, every evening the young men assemble in the open space before the chief's house and engage in contests of strength and agility, while the women watch them from the long gallery or verandah of the house. Another popular pastime during the festival of sowing is a masquerade. The scene of the performance is the open space in front of the chief's house. As the day draws towards evening, the villagers begin to assemble in the gallery or verandah of the house in order to secure good places for viewing the masquerade. All the maskers at these ceremonies represent evil spirits. The men wear ugly wooden masks on their faces, and their bodies are swathed in masses of slit banana leaves, so as to imitate the hideous faces and hairy bodies of demons. The

QUAINT CUSTOMS

young women wear on their heads cylindrical baskets, which conceal their real features, while they exhibit to the spectators grotesque human faces formed by stitches on pieces of white cotton, which are fastened to the baskets. On the occasion when a Dutch explorer witnessed the ceremony, the first to appear on the scene were some men wearing wooden masks and helmets and so thickly wrapt in banana leaves that they looked like moving masses of green foliage. They danced silently, keeping time to the beat of the gongs. They were followed by other figures, some of whom executed war-dances; but the weight of their leafy envelope was such that they soon grew tired, and though they leaped high, they uttered none of the wild war-whoops which usually accompany these martial exercises. When darkness fell, the dances ceased and were replaced by a little drama representing a boar brought to bay by a pack of hounds. The part of the boar was played by an actor wearing a wooden boar's mask, who ran about on all fours and grunted in a life-like manner, while the hounds, acted by young men, snarled, yelped, and made dashes at him. The play was watched with lively interest and peals of laughter by the spectators. Later in the evening eight disguised girls danced, one behind the other, with slow steps and waving arms, to the glimmering light of torches and the strains of a sort of jew's harp.

SWINGING, CAT'S CRADLES, AND SONGS

SWINGING, CAT'S CRADLES, AND SONGS

To procure good crops of the taro and yams, on which they depend for their subsistence, the Kai resort to many superstitious practices. For example, in order to make the yams strike deep roots, they touch the shoots with the bone of a wild animal that has been killed in the recesses of a cave, imagining that just as the creature penetrated deep into the earth, so the shoots that have been touched with its bone will descend deep into the ground. And in order that the taro may bear large and heavy fruit, they place the shoots, before planting them, on a large and heavy block of stone, believing that the stone will communicate its valuable properties of size and weight to the future fruit. Moreover, great use is made of spells and incantations to promote the growth of the crops, and all persons who utter such magical formulas for this purpose have to abstain from eating certain foods until the plants have sprouted and given promise of a good crop. For example, they may not eat young bamboo shoots, which are a favourite article of diet with the people. The reason is that the young shoots are covered with fine prickles, which cause itching and irritation of the skin; from which the Kai infer that if an enchanter of field-fruits were to eat bamboo shoots, the contagion of their prickles would be conveyed through him to the fruits and would manifest itself in a pungent disagreeable flavour. For a similar reason no charmer of the crops who

QUAINT CUSTOMS

knows his business would dream of eating crabs, because he is well aware that if he were to do so the leaves and stalks of the plants would be dashed in pieces by a pelting rain, just like the long thin brittle legs of a dead crab. Again, were such an enchanter to eat any of the edible kinds of locusts, it seems obvious to the Kai that locusts would devour the crops over which the imprudent wizard had recited his spells. Above all, people who are concerned in planting fields must on no account eat pork; because pigs, whether wild or tame, are the most deadly enemies of the crops, which they grub up and destroy; from which it follows, as surely as the night does the day, that if you eat pork while you are at work on the farm, your fields will be devastated by inroads of pigs.

However, these precautions are not the only measures which the Kai people adopt for the benefit of the yams and the taro. "In the opinion of the natives various games are important for a proper growth of the field-fruits; hence these games may only be played in the time after the work on the fields has been done. Thus to swing on a long Spanish reed fastened to a branch of a tree is thought to have a good effect on the newly-planted yams. Therefore swinging is practised by old and young, by men and women. No one who has an interest in the growth of his crop in the field leaves the swing idle. As they swing to and fro they sing swing-songs. These songs often contain only the names of the kinds of yams that have been planted, together with the joyous harvest-cry repeated with

SWINGING, CAT'S CRADLES, AND SONGS

variations, 'I have found a fine fruit!' In leaping from the swing, they cry, '*Kakulili!*' By calling out the name of the yams they think to draw their shoots upwards out of the ground. A small bow with a string, on which a wooden flag adorned with a feather is made to slide down, may only be used when the yams are beginning to wind up about their props. The tender shoots are then touched with the bow, while a song is sung which is afterwards often repeated in the village. The intention is to cause a strong upward growth of the plants. In order that the foliage of the yams may sprout luxuriantly and grow green and spread, the Kai people play cat's cradle. Each of the intricate figures has a definite meaning and a name to match: for example, 'the Flock of Pigeons,' 'the Star,' 'the Flying Fox,' 'the Sago-palm Fan,' 'the Lizard and the Dog,' 'the Pig,' 'the Sentinel-box in the Fields,' 'the Rat's Nest,' 'the Wasp's Nest in the Bamboo-thicket,' 'the Kangaroo,' 'the Spider's Web,' 'the Little Children,' 'the Canoe,' 'Rain and Sunshine,' 'the Pig's Pitfall,' 'the Fish-spawn,' 'the Two Cousins.' By spinning large native acorns or a sort of wild fig they think that they foster the growth of the newly-planted taro; the plants will 'turn about and broaden.' The game must therefore only be played at the time when the taro is planted. The same holds good of spearing at the stalks of taro leaves with the ribs of sago leaves used as miniature spears. This is done when the taro leaves have unfolded themselves, but when the plants have not yet set any tubers. A single leaf is

QUAINT CUSTOMS

cut from a number of stems, and these leaves are brought into the village. The game is played by two partners, who sit down opposite to each other at a distance of three or four paces. A number of taro stalks lie beside each. He who has speared all his adversary's stalks first is victor; then they change stalks and the game begins again. By piercing the leaves they think that they incite the plants to set tubers. Almost more remarkable than the limitation of these games to the time when work on the fields is going forward is the custom of the Kai people, which only permits the tales of the olden time or popular legends to be told at the time when the newly-planted fruits are budding and sprouting." At the end of every such tale the Kai storyteller mentions the names of the various kinds of yams, and adds, "Shoots (for the new planting) and fruits (to eat) in abundance!" "From their concluding words we see that the Kai legends are only told for a quite definite purpose, namely, to promote the welfare of the yams planted in the field. By reviving the memory of the ancient beings, to whom the origin of the field-fruits is referred, they imagine that they influence the growth of the fruits for good. When the planting is over, and especially when the young plants begin to sprout, the telling of legends comes to an end. In the villages it is always only a few old men who as good story-tellers can hold the attention of their hearers."

GAMES IN HONOUR OF THE DEAD

GAMES IN HONOUR OF DEAD WARRIORS

The Greeks sometimes established games to perpetuate the memory or to appease the ghosts of large numbers of men who had perished on the field of battle or been massacred in cold blood. When the Carthaginians and Tyrrhenians together had beaten the Phocaeans in a sea-fight, they landed their prisoners near Agylla in Etruria and stoned them all to death. After that, whenever the people of Agylla or their oxen or their sheep passed the scene of the massacre, they were attacked by a strange malady, which distorted their bodies and deprived them of the use of their limbs. So they consulted the Delphic oracle, and the priestess told them that they must offer great sacrifices to the dead Phocaeans and institute equestrian and athletic games in their honour, no doubt to appease the angry ghosts of the murdered men, who were supposed to be doing the mischief. At Plataea down to the second century of our era might be seen the graves of the men who fell in the great battle with the Persians. Sacrifices were offered to them every year with great solemnity. The chief magistrate of Plataea, clad in a purple robe, washed with his own hands the tombstones and anointed them with scented oil. He slaughtered a black bull over a burning pyre and called upon the dead warriors to come and partake of the banquet and the blood. Then filling a bowl of wine and pouring a libation he said, "I drink to the men who died for the freedom of Greece."

QUAINT CUSTOMS

GAMES ASSUMING THE CHARACTER OF A GREAT FAIR

It appears that many different peoples have been in the habit of holding games, including horse-races, in honour of the dead; and as the ancient Greeks unquestionably did so within historical times for men whose existence is as little open to question as that of Wellington and Napoleon, we cannot dismiss as improbable the tradition that the Olympic and perhaps other great Greek games were instituted to commemorate real men who once lived, died, and were buried on the spot where the festivals were afterwards held. When the person so commemorated had been great and powerful in his lifetime, his ghost would be deemed great and powerful after death, and the games celebrated in his honour might naturally attract crowds of spectators. The need of providing food and accommodation for the multitude which assembled on these occasions would in turn draw numbers of hucksters and merchants to the spot, and thus what in its origin had been a solemn religious ceremony might gradually assume more and more the character of a fair, that is, of a concourse of people brought together mainly for purposes of trade and amusement. This theory might account for the origin not only of the Olympic and other Greek games, but also for that of the great fairs or public assemblies of ancient Ireland which have been compared, not without reason, to the Greek games.

GAMES AND FAIRS

Indeed the two most famous of these Irish festivals, in which horse-races played a prominent part, are actually said to have been instituted in honour of the dead. Most celebrated of all was the fair of Tailltiu or Tailltin, held at a place in the county of Meath which is now called Teltown on the Blackwater, midway between Navan and Kells. The festival lasted for a fortnight before Lammas (the first of August) and a fortnight after it. Among the manly sports and contests which formed a leading feature of the fair horse-races held the principal place. But trade was not neglected, and among the wares brought to market were marriageable women who, according to a tradition which survived into the nineteenth century, were bought and sold as wives for one year. The very spot where the marriages took place is still pointed out by the peasantry; they call it "Marriage Hollow." Multitudes flocked to the fair not only from all parts of Ireland, but even from Scotland; it is officially recorded that in the year A.D. 1169 the horses and chariots alone, exclusive of the people on foot, extended in a continuous line for more than six English miles, from Tailltin to Mullach-Aiti, now the Hill of Lloyd near Kells. The Irish historians relate that the fair of Tailltin was instituted by Lug in honour of his foster-mother Tailltiu, whom he buried under a great sepulchral mound on the spot, ordering that a commemorative festival with games and sports should be celebrated there annually for ever. The other great fair of ancient Ireland was held only once in three years at Carman, now called

QUAINT CUSTOMS

Wexford, in Leinster. It began on Lammas Day (the first of August) and lasted six days. A horse-race took place on each day of the festival. In different parts of the green there were separate markets for victuals, for cattle and horses, and for gold and precious stuffs of the merchants. Harpers harped and pipers piped for the entertainment of the crowds, and in other parts of the fair bards recited in the ears of rapt listeners old romantic tales of forays and cattle-raids, of battles and murders, of love and courtship and marriage. Prizes were awarded to the best performers in every art. In the Book of Ballymote the fair of Carman or Garman is said to have been founded in accordance with the dying wish of a chief named Garman, who was buried on the spot, after begging that a fair of mourning should be instituted for him and should bear his name for ever. "It was considered an institution of great importance, and among the blessings promised to the men of Leinster from holding it and duly celebrating the established games, were plenty of corn, fruit and milk, abundance of fish in their lakes and rivers, domestic prosperity, and immunity from the yoke of any other province. On the other hand, the evils to follow from the neglect of this institution were to be failure and early greyness on them and their kings."

CHILDREN OF THE MOON

CHILDREN OF THE MOON AND SHOOTING STARS

By some Indians of California meteors were called "children of the moon," and whenever young women saw one of them they fell to the ground and covered their heads, fearing that, if the meteor saw them, their faces would become ugly and diseased. The Tarahumares of Mexico fancy that a shooting star is a dead sorcerer coming to harm a man who harmed him in life. Hence when they see one they huddle together and scream for terror. When a German traveller was living with the Bororos of central Brazil, a splendid meteor fell, spreading dismay through the Indian village. It was believed to be the soul of a dead medicine-man, who suddenly appeared in this form to announce that he wanted meat, and that, as a preliminary measure, he proposed to visit somebody with an attack of dysentery. Its appearance was greeted with yells from a hundred throats: men, women, and children swarmed out of their huts like ants whose nest has been disturbed; and soon watch-fires blazed, round which at a little distance groups of dusky figures gathered, while in the middle, thrown into strong relief by the flickering light of the fire, two red-painted sorcerers reeled and staggered in a state of frantic excitement, snorting and spitting towards the quarter of the sky where the meteor had run its brief but brilliant course. Pressing his right hand to his yelling mouth, each

QUAINT CUSTOMS

of them held aloft in his extended left, by way of propitiating the angry star, a bundle of cigarettes. "There!" they seemed to say, "all that tobacco will we give to ward off the impending visitation. Woe to you, if you do not leave us in peace."

THE GIANTS OF DUNKIRK

At Dunkirk the procession of the giants took place on Midsummer Day, the twenty-fourth of June. The festival, which was known as the Follies of Dunkirk, attracted such multitudes of spectators, that the inns and private houses could not lodge them all, and many had to sleep in cellars or in the streets. In 1755 an eye-witness estimated that the number of onlookers was not less than forty thousand, without counting the inhabitants of the town. The streets through which the procession took its way were lined with double ranks of soldiers, and the houses crammed with spectators from top to bottom. High mass was celebrated in the principal church and then the procession got under weigh. First came the guilds or brotherhoods, the members walking two and two with great waxen tapers, lighted, in their hands. They were followed by the friars and the secular priests, and then came the Abbot, magnificently attired. When these were past, the real "Follies of Dunkirk" began. They consisted of pageants of various sorts wheeled through the streets in cars. These appear to have varied somewhat from year to year; but if

THE GIANTS OF DUNKIRK

we may judge from the processions of 1755 and 1757, both of which have been described by eye-witnesses, a standing show was a car decked with foliage and branches to imitate a wood, and carrying a number of men dressed in leaves or in green scaly skins, who squirted water on the people from pewter syringes. An English spectator has compared these maskers to the Green Men of our own country on May Day. Last of all came the giant and giantess. The giant was a huge figure of wicker-work, occasionally as much as forty-five feet high, dressed in a long blue robe with gold stripes, which reached to his feet, concealing the dozen or more men who made it dance and bob its head to the spectators. This colossal effigy went by the name of Papa Reuss, and carried in its pocket a bouncing infant of Brobdingnagian proportions, who kept bawling "Papa! papa!" in a voice of thunder, only pausing from time to time to devour the victuals which were handed out to him from the windows. The rear was brought up by the daughter of the giant, constructed, like her sire, of wicker-work, and little, if at all, inferior to him in size. She wore a rose-coloured robe, with a gold watch as large as a warming-pan at her side: her breast glittered with jewels: her complexion was high, and her eyes and head turned with as easy a grace as the men inside could contrive to impart to their motions. The procession came to an end with the revolution of 1789, and has never been revived.

QUAINT CUSTOMS

KING HOP

In Siam on the sixth day of the moon in the sixth month a temporary king is appointed, who for three days enjoys the royal prerogatives, the real king remaining shut up in his palace. This temporary king sends his numerous satellites in all directions to seize and confiscate whatever they can find in the bazaar and open shops; even the ships and junks which arrive in harbour during the three days are forfeited to him and must be redeemed. He goes to a field in the middle of the city, whither they bring a gilded plough drawn by gaily-decked oxen. After the plough has been anointed and the oxen rubbed with incense, the mock king traces nine furrows with the plough, followed by aged dames of the palace scattering the first seed of the season. As soon as the nine furrows are drawn, the crowd of spectators rushes in and scrambles for the seed which has just been sown, believing that, mixed with the seed-rice, it will ensure a plentiful crop. Then the oxen are unyoked, and rice, maize, sesame, sago, bananas, sugar-cane, melons, and so on, are set before them; whatever they eat first will, it is thought, be dear in the year following, though some people interpret the omen in the opposite sense. During this time the temporary king stands leaning against a tree with his right foot resting on his left knee. From standing thus on one foot he is popularly known as King Hop; but his official title is Phaya Phollathep, "Lord of the

KING HOP

Heavenly Hosts.” He is a sort of Minister of Agriculture; all disputes about fields, rice, and so forth, are referred to him. There is moreover another ceremony in which he personates the king. It takes place in the second month (which falls in the cold season) and lasts three days. He is conducted in procession to an open place opposite the Temple of the Brahmans, where there are a number of poles dressed like May-poles, upon which the Brahmans swing. All the while that they swing and dance, the Lord of the Heavenly Hosts has to stand on one foot upon a seat which is made of bricks plastered over, covered with a white cloth, and hung with tapestry. He is supported by a wooden frame with a gilt canopy, and two Brahmans stand one on each side of him. The dancing Brahmans carry buffalo horns with which they draw water from a large copper caldron and sprinkle it on the spectators; this is supposed to bring good luck, causing the people to dwell in peace and quiet, health and prosperity. The time during which the Lord of the Heavenly Hosts has to stand on one foot is about three hours. This is thought “to prove the dispositions of the Devattas and spirits.” If he lets his foot down “he is liable to forfeit his property and have his family enslaved by the king; as it is believed to be a bad omen, portending destruction to the state, and instability to the throne. But if he stand firm he is believed to have gained a victory over evil spirits, and he has moreover the privilege, ostensibly at least, of seizing any ship which may enter the harbour during these three

QUAINT CUSTOMS

days, and taking its contents, and also of entering any open shop in the town and carrying away what he chooses."

Such were the duties and privileges of the Siamese King Hop down to about the middle of the nineteenth century or later. Under the reign of the late enlightened monarch this quaint personage was to some extent both shorn of the glories and relieved of the burden of his office. He still watches, as of old, the Brahmans rushing through the air in a swing suspended between two tall masts, each some ninety feet high; but he is allowed to sit instead of stand, and, although public opinion still expects him to keep his right foot on his left knee during the whole of the ceremony, he would incur no legal penalty were he, to the great chagrin of the people, to put his weary foot to the ground. Other signs, too, tell of the invasion of the East by the ideas and civilization of the West. The thoroughfares that lead to the scene of the performance are blocked with carriages: lamp-posts and telegraph-posts, to which eager spectators cling like monkeys, rise above the dense crowd; and, while a tatterdemalion band of the old style, in gaudy garb of vermilion and yellow, bangs and tootles away on drums and trumpets of an antique pattern, the procession of barefooted soldiers in brilliant uniforms steps briskly along to the lively strains of a modern military band playing "Marching through Georgia."

THE FIRE-WALK

THE FIRE-WALK

In the island of Mbengga once every year a dracaena, which grows in profusion on the grassy hillsides, becomes fit to yield the sugar of which its fibrous root is full. To render the roots edible it is necessary to bake them among hot stones for four days. A great pit is dug and filled with great stones and blazing logs, and when the flames have died down and the stones are at white heat, the oven is ready to receive the roots. At this moment the members of a certain clan called Na Ivilankata, favoured of the gods, leap into the oven and walk unharmed upon the hot stones, which would scorch the feet of any other persons. On one occasion when the ceremony was witnessed by Europeans fifteen men of the clan, dressed in garlands and fringes, walked unscathed through the furnace, where tongues of fire played among the hot stones. The pit was about nineteen feet wide and the men marched round it, planting their feet squarely and firmly on each stone. When they emerged from the pit, the feet of several were examined and shewed no trace of scorching; even the anklets of dried tree-fern leaves which they wore on their legs were unburnt. The immunity thus enjoyed by members of the clan in the fiery furnace is explained by a legend that in former days a chief of the clan received for himself and his descendants this remarkable privilege from a certain god, whom

QUAINT CUSTOMS

the chief had accidentally dragged out of a deep pool of water by the hair of his head.

MARAKÉ

Among a tribe of Indians in the north of Brazil, on the borders of Guiana, young men who are candidates for marriage must submit to be stung all over their persons not only with ants but with wasps, which are applied to their naked bodies in curious instruments of trellis-work shaped like fantastic quadrupeds or birds. The patient invariably falls down in a swoon and is carried like dead to his hammock, where he is tightly lashed with cords. As they come to themselves, they writhe in agony, so that their hammocks rock violently to and fro, causing the hut to shake as if it were about to collapse. This dreadful ordeal is called by the Indians a *maraké*.

The same ordeal, under the same name, is also practised by an Indian tribe of French Guiana, but with them, we are told, it is no longer deemed an indispensable preliminary to marriage; "it is rather a sort of national medicine administered chiefly to the youth of both sexes." Applied to men, the *maraké*, as it is called, "sharpens them, prevents them from being heavy and lazy, makes them active, brisk, industrious, imparts strength, and helps them to shoot well with the bow; without it the Indians would always be slack and rather sickly, would always have a little fever, and would lie perpetually

MARAKÉ

in their hammocks. As for the women, the *maraké* keeps them from going to sleep, renders them active, alert, brisk, gives them strength and a liking for work, makes them good housekeepers, good workers. Every one undergoes the *maraké* at least twice in his life, sometimes thrice, and oftener if he likes. It may be had from the age of about eight years and upward, and no one thinks it odd that a man of forty should voluntarily submit to it." Similarly the Indians of St. Juan Capistrano in California used to be branded on some part of their bodies, generally on the right arm, but sometimes on the leg also, not as a proof of manly fortitude, but because they believed that the custom added greater strength to the nerves, and gave a better pulse for the management of the bow. Afterwards they were whipped with nettles and covered with ants, that they might become robust, and the infliction was always performed in summer, during the months of July and August, when the nettle was in its most fiery state. They gathered small bunches, which they fastened together, and the poor deluded Indian was chastised, by inflicting blows with them upon his naked limbs, until unable to walk; and then he was carried to the nest of the nearest and most furious species of ants, and laid down among them, while some of his friends, with sticks, kept annoying the insects to make them still more violent. What torments did they not undergo! What pain! What terrible inflictions! Yet their faith gave them power to endure all without a murmur, and they remained as if dead. Having

QUAINT CUSTOMS

undergone these dreadful ordeals, they were considered as invulnerable, and believed that the arrows of their enemies could no longer harm them.

BEAR FESTIVALS

Towards the end of winter a bear cub is caught and brought into an Aino village. If it is very small, it is suckled by an Aino woman, but should there be no woman able to suckle it, the little animal is fed from the hand or the mouth. If it cries loudly and long for its mother, as it is apt to do, its owner will take it to his bosom and let it sleep with him for a few nights, thus dispelling its fears and sense of loneliness. During the day it plays about in the hut with the children and is treated with great affection. But when the cub grows big enough to pain people by hugging or scratching them, he is shut up in a strong wooden cage, where he stays generally for two or three years, fed on fish and millet porridge, till it is time for him to be killed and eaten. But it is a peculiarly striking fact that the young bear is not kept merely to furnish a good meal; rather he is regarded and honoured as a fetish, or even as a sort of higher being. In Yezo the festival is generally celebrated in September or October. Before it takes place the Aino apologize to their gods, alleging that they have treated the bear kindly as long as they could, now they can feed him no longer, and are obliged to kill him. A man who gives a bear-feast invites his

BEAR FESTIVALS

relations and friends; in a small village nearly the whole community takes part in the feast; indeed, guests from distant villages are invited and generally come, allured by the prospect of getting drunk for nothing. The form of invitation runs somewhat as follows: "I, So-and-so, am about to sacrifice the dear little divine thing who resides among the mountains. My friends and masters, come ye to the feast; we will then unite in the great pleasure of sending the god away. Come." When all the people are assembled in front of the cage, an orator chosen for the purpose addresses the bear and tells it that they are about to send it forth to its ancestors. He craves pardon for what they are about to do to it, hopes it will not be angry, and comforts it by assuring the animal that many of the sacred whittled sticks and plenty of cakes and wine will be sent with it on the long journey. One speech of this sort was heard and ran as follows: "O thou divine one, thou wast sent into the world for us to hunt. O thou precious little divinity, we worship thee; pray hear our prayer. We have nourished thee and brought thee up with a deal of pains and trouble, all because we love thee so. Now, as thou hast grown big, we are about to send thee to thy father and mother. When thou comest to them please speak well of us, and tell them how kind we have been; please come to us again and we will sacrifice thee." Having been secured with ropes, the bear is then let out of the cage and assailed with a shower of blunt arrows in order to rouse it to fury. When it has spent itself in vain struggles, it is tied up to a

QUAINT CUSTOMS

stake, gagged and strangled, its neck being placed between two poles, which are then violently compressed, all the people eagerly helping to squeeze the animal to death. An arrow is also discharged into the beast's heart by a good marksman, but so as not to shed blood, for they think that it would be very unlucky if any of the blood were to drip on the ground. However, the men sometimes drink the warm blood of the bear, "that the courage and other virtues it possesses may pass into them"; and sometimes they besmear themselves and their clothes with the blood in order to ensure success in hunting. When the animal has been strangled to death, it is skinned and its head is cut off and set in the east window of the house, where a piece of its own flesh is placed under its snout, together with a cup of its own meat boiled, some millet dumplings, and dried fish. Prayers are then addressed to the dead animal; amongst other things it is sometimes invited, after going away to its father and mother, to return into the world in order that it may again be reared for sacrifice. When the bear is supposed to have finished eating its own flesh, the man who presides at the feast takes the cup containing the boiled meat, salutes it, and divides the contents between all the company present: every person, young and old alike, must taste a little. The cup is called "the cup of offering" because it has just been offered to the dead bear. When the rest of the flesh has been cooked, it is shared out in like manner among all the people, everybody partaking of at least a morsel; not to partake of the feast

BEAR FESTIVALS

would be equivalent to excommunication, it would be to place the recreant outside the pale of Aino fellowship. Formerly every particle of the bear, except the bones, had to be eaten up at the banquet, but this rule is now relaxed. The head, on being detached from the skin, is set up on a long pole beside the sacred wands outside of the house, where it remains till nothing but the bare white skull is left. Skulls so set up are worshipped not only at the time of the festival, but very often as long as they last. The Aino allege that they really do believe the spirits of the worshipful animals to reside in the skulls; that is why they address them as "divine preservers" and "precious divinities."

A traveller tells how on entering a hut he found about thirty Aino present, men, women, and children, all dressed in their best. The master of the house first offered a libation on the fireplace to the god of the fire, and the guests followed his example. Then a libation was offered to the house-god in his sacred corner of the hut. Meanwhile the housewife, who had nursed the bear, sat by herself, silent and sad, bursting now and then into tears. Her grief was obviously unaffected, and it deepened as the festival went on. Next, the master of the house and some of the guests went out of the hut and offered libations before the bear's cage. A few drops were presented to the bear in a saucer, which he at once upset. Then the women and girls danced round the cage, their faces turned towards it, their knees slightly bent, rising and hopping on their toes. As they danced they clapped their hands and

QUAINT CUSTOMS

sang a monotonous song. The housewife and a few old women, who might have nursed many bears, danced tearfully, stretching out their arms to the bear, and addressing it in terms of endearment. The young folks were less affected; they laughed as well as sang. Disturbed by the noise, the bear began to rush about his cage and howl lamentably. Next libations were offered at the sacred wands which stand outside of an Aino hut. These wands are about a couple of feet high, and are whittled at the top into spiral shavings. Five new wands with bamboo leaves attached to them had been set up for the festival. This is regularly done when a bear is killed; the leaves mean that the animal may come to life again. Then the bear was let out of his cage, a rope was thrown round his neck, and he was led about in the neighbourhood of the hut. While this was being done, the men, headed by a chief, shot at the beast with arrows tipped with wooden buttons. Then the bear was taken before the sacred wands, a stick was put in his mouth, nine men knelt on him and pressed his neck against a beam. In five minutes the animal had expired without uttering a sound. Meantime the women and girls had taken post behind the men, where they danced, lamenting, and beating the men who were killing the bear. The bear's carcase was next placed on the mat before the sacred wands; and a sword and quiver, taken from the wands, were hung round the beast's neck. Being a she-bear, it was also adorned with a necklace and ear-rings. Then food and drink were offered to it, in the shape of millet-broth, millet-

FUNERAL ORATION TO THE BEAR

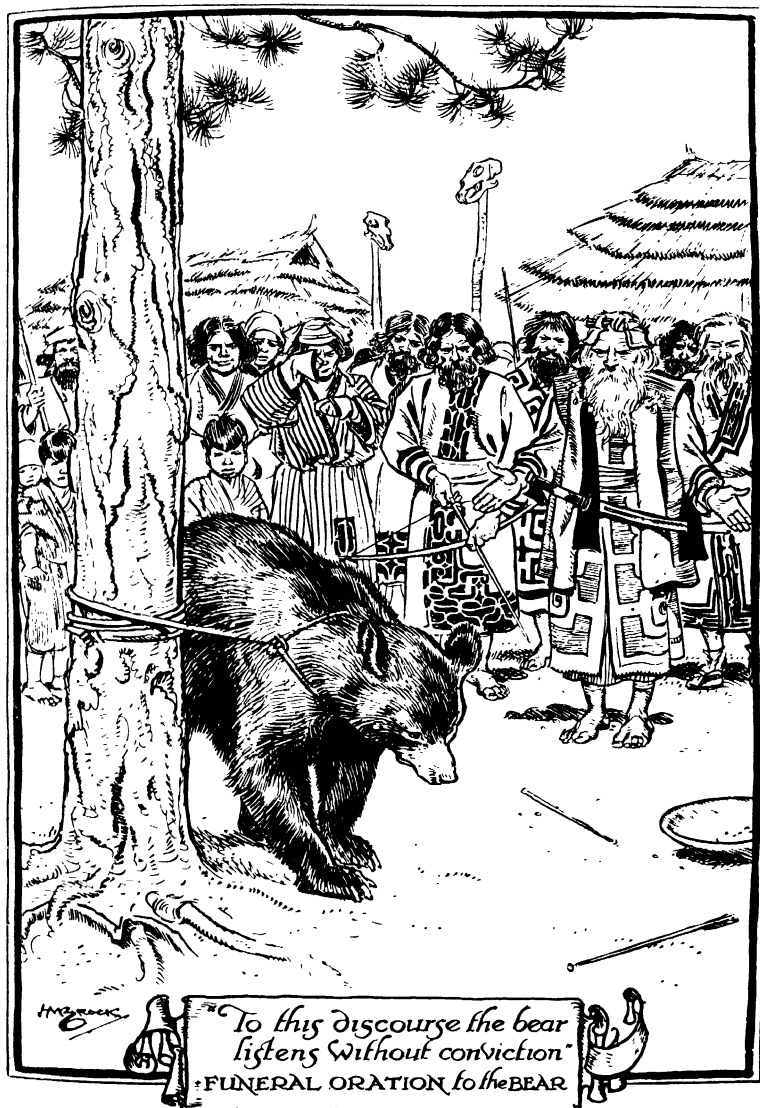
cakes, and a pot of *sake*. The men now sat down on mats before the dead bear, offered libations to it, and drank deep. Meanwhile the women and girls had laid aside all marks of sorrow, and danced merrily, none more merrily than the old women. When the mirth was at its height two young Aino, who had let the bear out of his cage, mounted the roof of the hut and threw cakes of millet among the company, who all scrambled for them without distinction of age or sex.

FUNERAL ORATION TO THE BEAR

We are told that the Aino of Saghalien do not look upon the bear as a god, but only as a messenger whom they despatch with various commissions to the god of the forest. The animal is kept for about two years in a cage, and then killed at a festival, which always takes place in winter and at night. The day before the sacrifice is devoted to lamentation, old women relieving each other in the duty of weeping and groaning in front of the bear's cage. Then about the middle of the night or very early in the morning an orator makes a long speech to the beast, reminding him how they have taken care of him, and fed him well, and bathed him in the river, and made him warm and comfortable. "Now," he proceeds, "we are holding a great festival in your honour. Be not afraid. We will not hurt you. We will only kill you and send you to the god of the forest who loves you. We are

QUAINT CUSTOMS

about to offer you a good dinner, the best you have ever eaten among us, and we will all weep for you together. The Aino who will kill you is the best shot among us. There he is, he weeps and asks your forgiveness; you will feel almost nothing, it will be done so quickly. We cannot feed you always, as you will understand. We have done enough for you; it is now your turn to sacrifice yourself for us. You will ask God to send us, for the winter, plenty of otters and sables, and for the summer, seals and fish in abundance. Do not forget our messages, we love you much, and our children will never forget you." When the bear has partaken of his last meal amid the general emotion of the spectators, the old women weeping afresh and the men uttering stifled cries, he is strapped, not without difficulty and danger, and being let out of the cage is led on leash or dragged, according to the state of his temper, thrice round his cage, then round his master's house, and lastly round the house of the orator. Thereupon he is tied up to a tree, which is decked with sacred whittled sticks of the usual sort; and the orator again addresses him in a long harangue, which sometimes lasts till the day is beginning to break. "Remember," he cries, "remember! I remind you of your whole life and of the services we have rendered you. It is now for you to do your duty. Do not forget what I have asked of you. You will tell the gods to give us riches, that our hunters may return from the forest laden with rare furs and animals good to eat; that our fishers may find



*"To this discourse the bear
listens without conviction"*
• FUNERAL ORATION to the BEAR •

FUNERAL ORATION TO THE BEAR

troops of seals on the shore and in the sea, and that their nets may crack under the weight of the fish. We have no hope but in you. The evil spirits laugh at us, and too often they are unfavourable and malignant to us, but they will bow before you. We have given you food and joy and health; now we kill you in order that you may in return send riches to us and to our children." To this discourse the bear, more and more surly and agitated, listens without conviction; round and round the tree he paces and howls lamentably, till, just as the first beams of the rising sun light up the scene, an archer speeds an arrow to his heart. No sooner has he done so than the marksman throws away his bow and flings himself on the ground, and the old men and women do the same, weeping and sobbing. Then they offer the dead beast a repast of rice and wild potatoes, and having spoken to him in terms of pity and thanked him for what he has done and suffered, they cut off his head and paws and keep them as sacred things. A banquet on the flesh of the bear follows. Women were formerly excluded from it, but now they share with the men. The flesh is boiled; custom forbids it to be roasted. And as the relics of the bear may not enter the house by the door, and Aino houses in Saghalien have no windows, a man gets up on the roof and lets the flesh, the head, and the skin down through the smoke-hole. Rice and wild potatoes are then offered to the head, and a pipe, tobacco, and matches are considerably placed beside it. Custom requires that the guests should eat up the whole

QUAINT CUSTOMS

animal before they depart: the use of salt and pepper at the meal is forbidden, and no morsel of the flesh may be given to the dogs. When the banquet is over, the head is carried away into the depth of the forest and deposited on a heap of bears' skulls, the bleached and mouldering relics of similar festivals in the past.

PROPITIATION OF DEAD WHALES

A formidable beast whose life the savage hunter takes with joy, yet with fear and trembling, is the whale. After the slaughter of a whale the maritime Koryak of north-eastern Siberia hold a communal festival, the essential part of which is based on the conception that the whale killed has come on a visit to the village; that it is staying for some time, during which it is treated with great respect; that it then returns to the sea to repeat its visit the following year; that it will induce its relatives to come along, telling them of the hospitable reception that has been accorded to it. According to the Koryak ideas, the whales, like all other animals, constitute one tribe, or rather family, of related individuals, who live in villages like the Koryak. They avenge the murder of one of their number, and are grateful for kindnesses that they may have received. An explorer saw such a festival. A white whale had been caught in the nets, and as the sea was partially frozen the carcass had to be brought ashore in a sledge. When it was seen

PROPITIATION OF DEAD WHALES

nearing the beach, a number of women, arrayed in their long embroidered dancing-coats, went forth to meet and welcome it, carrying lighted firebrands in their hands. To carry burning firebrands from the hearth is the ancient Koryak fashion of greeting an honoured guest. Strictly speaking, the women who go forth to welcome a whale to the house should wear masks of sedge-grass on their faces as well as dancing-coats on their bodies, and should carry sacrificial alder branches as well as firebrands in their hands, but on the present occasion the women dispensed with the use of masks. They danced, shaking their heads, moving their shoulders, and swinging their whole bodies with arms outstretched, now squatting, now rising and singing, "Ah! a guest has come." In spite of the cold and the wind the sweat dripped from them, so violently did they dance, and they sang and screamed till they were hoarse. When the sledge with its burden had reached the shore, one of the women pronounced an incantation over the whale's head, and then thrust alder branches and sacrificial grass into its mouth. Next they muffled its head in a hood, apparently to prevent the creature from witnessing the painful spectacle of its own dissection. After that the men cut up the carcase, and the women collected the blood in pails. Two seals, which had also been killed, were included in the festivities which followed. The heads of all three animals were cut off and placed on the roof of the house. Next day the festival began. In the morning the women plaited travelling-bags of grass

QUAINT CUSTOMS

for the use of the whale, and made grass masks. In the evening, the people having assembled in a large underground house, some boiled pieces of the white whale were placed in a grass bag and set before a wooden image of a white whale, so that the animal, or its departed spirit, was thus apparently supposed to be regaled with portions of its own body; for the white whale and the seals were treated as honoured guests at the banquet. To keep up the pretence, the people were silent or spoke only in whispers for fear of wakening the guests before the time. At last the preparations were complete: fresh faggots piled on the hearth sent up a blaze, illuminating with an unsteady light the smoke-blackened walls of the vast underground dwelling, which a moment before had been shrouded in darkness; and the long silence was broken by the joyful cries of the women, "Here dear guests have come!" "Visit us often!" "When you go back to the sea, tell your friends to call on us also, we will prepare just as nice food for them as for you." With these words they pointed to puddings set out temptingly on the boards. Next the host took a piece of the fat of the white whale and threw it into the fire, saying, "We are burning it in the fire for thee!" Then he went to the domestic shrine, placed lumps of fat before the rude effigies of the guardian spirits, and smeared fat on their mouths. The appetites of the higher powers having thus been satisfied, the people set to and partook of the good things provided for them, including the flesh of the white whale and the seals. Lastly, two old

PROPITIATION OF DEAD WHALES

men practised divination by means of the shoulder-blade of a seal to discover whether the white whale would go back to the sea and call his fellows to come and be caught like himself. In order to extract this information from the bone, burning coals were piled on it, and the resulting cracks were carefully scrutinized. To the delight of all present the omens proved favourable: a long transverse crack indicated the sea to which the spirit of the white whale would soon depart. Four days later the departure actually took place. It was a bright sunshiny wintry morning: the frost was keen; and for more than a mile seaward the beach was covered with blocks of ice. In the great underground dwelling, where the feast had been held, the hearth had been turned into something like an altar. On it lay the heads of the white whale and the seals, and beside them travelling-bags of grass filled with puddings, which the souls of the animals were to take with them on their long journey. Beside the hearth knelt two women, their faces covered with grass masks and their heads bent over the bags, mumbling an incantation. The sunlight streamed down on them through the smoke-hole overhead, but spread only a dim twilight through the remoter recesses of the vast subterranean chamber. The masks worn by the women were intended to guard them against the spirit of the white whale, which was supposed to be hovering invisible in the air. The incantation over, the women rose from their knees and doffed their masks. A careful examination of a pudding, which had been offered in sacrifice

QUAINT CUSTOMS

to the white whale, now revealed the joyful intelligence that the spirit of the whale had accepted the sacrifice and was about to return to the sea. All that remained, therefore, to do was to speed him on his way. For that purpose, two men ascended the roof, let down thongs through the smoke-hole, and hauled up the heads of the white whale and of the seals together with the travelling-bags of provisions. That concluded the despatch of the souls of the dead animals to their home in the great waters.

SABLES AND BEAVERS

When Siberian sable-hunters have caught a sable, no one is allowed to see it, and they think that if good or evil be spoken of the captured sable no more sables will be caught. A hunter has been known to express his belief that the sables could hear what was said of them as far off as Moscow. He said that the chief reason why the sable hunt was now so unproductive was that some live sables had been sent to Moscow. There they had been viewed with astonishment as strange animals, and the sables cannot abide that. Another, though minor, cause of the diminished take of sables was, he alleged, that the world is now much worse than it used to be, so that nowadays a hunter will sometimes hide the sable which he has got instead of putting it into the common stock. This also, said he, the sables cannot abide. A Russian traveller happening once to enter a Gilyak hut in the absence

SABLES AND BEAVERS

of the owner, observed a freshly killed sable hanging on the wall. Seeing him look at it, the housewife in consternation hastened to muffle the animal in a fur cap, after which it was taken down, wrapt in birch bark, and put away out of sight. Despite the high price he offered for it, the traveller's efforts to buy the animal were unavailing. It was bad enough, they told him, that he, a stranger, had seen the dead sable in its skin, but far worse consequences for the future catch of sables would follow if they were to sell him the animal entire. Alaskan hunters preserve the bones of sables and beavers out of reach of the dogs for a year and then bury them carefully, "lest the spirits who look after the beavers and sables should consider that they are regarded with contempt, and hence no more should be killed or trapped." The Shuswap Indians of British Columbia think that if they did not throw beaver-bones into the river, the beavers would not go into the traps any more, and that the same thing would happen were a dog to eat the flesh or gnaw the bone of a beaver. Carrier Indians who have trapped martens or beavers take care to keep them from the dogs; for if a dog were to touch these animals the Indians believe that the other martens or beavers would not suffer themselves to be caught. A missionary who fell in with an old Carrier Indian asked him what luck he had in the chase. "Oh, don't speak to me about it," replied the Indian; "there are beavers in plenty. I caught one myself immediately after my arrival here, but unluckily a dog got hold of it. You know that after that it

QUAINT CUSTOMS

has been impossible for me to catch another." "Nonsense," said the missionary, "set your traps as if nothing had happened, and you will see." "That would be useless," answered the Indian in a tone of despair, "quite useless. You don't know the ways of the beaver. If a dog merely touches a beaver, all the other beavers are angry at the owner of the dog, and always keep away from his traps." It was in vain that the missionary tried to laugh or argue him out of his persuasion; the man persisted in abandoning his snares and giving up the hunt, because, as he asserted, the beavers were angry with him. A French traveller, observing that the Indians of Louisiana did not give the bones of beavers and otters to their dogs, enquired the reason. They told him there was a spirit in the woods who would tell the other beavers and otters, and that after that they would catch no more animals of these species. The Canadian Indians were equally particular not to let their dogs gnaw the bones, or at least certain of the bones, of beavers. They took the greatest pains to collect and preserve these bones, and, when the beaver had been caught in a net, they threw them into the river. To a Jesuit who argued that the beavers could not possibly know what became of their bones, the Indians replied, "You know nothing about catching beavers and yet you will be prating about it. Before the beaver is stone dead, his soul takes a turn in the hut of the man who is killing him and makes a careful note of what is done with his bones. If the bones are given to the dogs, the other beavers would get word of it and would

SACRED ANIMALS

not let themselves be caught. Whereas, if their bones are thrown into the fire or a river, they are quite satisfied; and it is particularly gratifying to the net which caught them." Before hunting the beaver they offered a solemn prayer to the Great Beaver, and presented him with tobacco; and when the chase was over, an orator pronounced a funeral oration over the dead beavers. He praised their spirit and wisdom. "You will hear no more," said he, "the voice of the chieftains who commanded you and whom you chose from among all the warrior beavers to give you laws. Your language, which the medicine-men understand perfectly, will be heard no more at the bottom of the lake. You will fight no more battles with the otters, your cruel foes. No, beavers! But your skins shall serve to buy arms; we will carry your smoked hams to our children; we will keep the dogs from eating your bones, which are so hard."

SACRED LIONS, LEOPARDS, BOA CON- STRICTORS, TOADS, AND SCORPIONS

The Bahimà of Ankole, in Central Africa, imagine that their dead kings are changed into lions. Their corpses are carried to a forest called Ensanzi, where they lie in state for several days. At the end of that time the body is supposed to burst and give forth a lion cub, which contains the spirit of the deceased king. The animal is nurtured by priests till it is grown up, when it is released and allowed

QUAINT CUSTOMS

to roam the forest with the other lions. It is the duty of the priests to feed and care for the lions and to hold communications with the dead kings when occasion arises. For that purpose the priests always live in a temple in the forest, where they receive frequent offerings of cattle for the lions. In this forest the lions are sacred and may not be killed, but in other parts of the country they may be slaughtered with impunity. Similarly, the Bahima think that at death the king's wives are changed into leopards; the transformation takes place in like manner through the bursting of the dead bodies in a belt of the same sacred forest. There the leopards are daily fed with offerings of meat by priests, whose office is hereditary. Further, the Bahima are of opinion that the spirits of dead princes and princesses come to life again in the form of snakes, which burst from their dead bodies in another belt of the same forest: there is a temple in the forest where priests feed and guard the holy serpents. When the little snakes have issued from the corpses of the princes, they are fed with milk till they are big enough to go alone. The El Kiboron clan of the Masai, in East Africa, imagine that when married men of the clan are buried, their bones turn into serpents. Hence the El Kiboron do not, like the other Masai, kill snakes: on the contrary they are glad to see the reptiles in the kraal and set out saucers of milk and honey for them on the ground. It is said that snakes never bite members of the clan. The Ababu and other tribes of the Congo region believe that at death their

SACRED ANIMALS

souls transmigrate into the bodies of various animals, such as the hippopotamus, the leopard, the gorilla, and the gazelle; and on no account would a man eat the flesh of an animal of the particular kind which he expects to inhabit in the next life. Some of the Caffres of the Zambesi region, in Portuguese territory, who believe in the transmigration of human souls into the bodies of animals, judge of the species of animals into which a dead person has transmigrated by the resemblance which he bore to it in his life. Thus the soul of a big burly man with prominent teeth will pass into an elephant; a strong man with a long beard will become a lion; an ugly man with a large mouth and thick lips will be a hyaena; and so on. Animals supposed to be tenanted by the spirits of the dead are treated as sacred and invulnerable. When a Portuguese lady, named Dona Maria, to whom the blacks were much attached, had departed this life, it chanced that a hyaena came repeatedly by night to the village and carried off pigs and kids. The lady's old slaves would not do the creature the smallest hurt, saying, "It is Dona Maria, our good mistress. She is hungry and comes to her house seeking what she may devour."

The belief that the souls of the dead transmigrate into the bodies of animals appears to be widely diffused among the tribes of Madagascar. Thus, for example, the souls of the Betsileo are thought after death to be re-born in boa constrictors, crocodiles, and eels of a particular sort according to their rank in life. It is the nobles, or at all events the

QUAINT CUSTOMS

most illustrious of them, who have the privilege of turning into boa constrictors at death. Accordingly these huge serpents are regarded as sacred by the Betsileo; nobody would dare to kill one of them. The people go down on their knees to them and salute them, just as they would do to a real live nobleman. It is a happy day when a boa constrictor deigns to visit the village which he formerly inhabited in human form. He receives an ovation from his family. They go forth to meet him, spread silk for him to crawl upon, and carry him off to the public square, where he is allowed to gorge himself with the blood of a sacrificed ox. The souls of commoners of good standing transmigrate into the bodies of crocodiles, and in their new form still serve their old masters, particularly by announcing to them the approach of the hour when they must shuffle out of the human frame into the frame of boa constrictors. Lastly, the scum of the population turn at death into eels, and to render the change as easy for them as possible it is customary to remove the bowels from the corpse and throw them into a sacred lake. The eel that swallows the first mouthful becomes the domicile of the soul of the deceased. No Betsileo would eat such eels. Again, the Antankarana, a tribe in the extreme north of Madagascar, believe that the spirits of their dead chiefs pass into crocodiles, while those of common folk are re-born in other animals. Once more, the Tanala, a tribe of south-eastern Madagascar, suppose that the souls of their dead transmigrate into certain animals, such as scorpions and

SACRED ANIMALS

insects, which accordingly they will not kill or eat, believing that the creatures will in like manner abstain from injuring them.

Some of the Nagas of Assam hold that the spirits of the departed, after undergoing a cycle of changes in a subterranean world, are re-born on earth in the form of butterflies or small house flies, only however in that shape to perish for ever. Hence, when these small flies light on the wine-cups of the living, the wassailers will not kill them for fear of destroying some one of the ancestors. For a like reason the Angamis, one of the Naga tribes, carefully abstain from injuring certain species of butterfly. At Ang Teng, a large village of Upper Burma, the river at a point above a dilapidated bridge swarms with fish, which the people hold sacred, because they imagine them to be their dead come to life again in a fishy form. In former days no one might kill one of these fish under pain of death. Once a Shan, caught fishing with some dead fish in his possession, was instantly haled away and killed. The people of Kon-Meney in eastern Cochin China will not eat toads, because long ago the soul of one of their chiefs passed at death into a toad. In his new shape he appeared to his son in a dream, informed him of the transformation, and commanded him to sacrifice a pig, a fowl, and millet wine to his deceased parent, assuring him that if he complied with the injunction the rice would grow well. The dutiful son obeyed the author of his being; the toad appeared in the rice-fields watching over the growth of the rice, and the crop was magnificent. For two generations

QUAINT CUSTOMS

the sacrifices were duly offered, the toad appeared at the time of sowing, and the granaries were full. Afterwards, however, the people neglected to sacrifice to the toad and were punished accordingly by failure of the crops and consequent famine. Some of the Chams of Indo-China believe that the souls of the dead inhabit the bodies of certain animals, such as serpents, crocodiles, and so forth, the kind of animal varying with the family. The species of animals most commonly regarded as tenanted by the spirits of the departed are the rodents and active climbing creatures which abound in the country, such as squirrels. According to some people, these small animals are especially the abode of infants or of children who died young. The souls of these little ones appear in dreams to their mourning parents and say, "I inhabit the body of a squirrel. Honour me as such. Make me a present of a flower, a coco-nut, a cup of roasted rice," and so on. The parents discharge this pious duty, respect these familiar spirits, ascribe illnesses to their displeasure, pray to them for healing, and on their deathbed commend to their descendants the care of such and such a spirit, as a member of the family.

BILKING AN OSTRICH'S GHOST

The Lengua Indians of the Gran Chaco love to hunt the ostrich, but when they have killed one of these birds and are bringing home the carcase to the village, they take steps to outwit the resentful

FISH TREATED WITH RESPECT

ghost of their victim. They think that when the first natural shock of death is passed, the ghost of the ostrich pulls himself together and makes after his body. Acting on this sage calculation, the Indians pluck feathers from the breast of the bird and strew them at intervals along the track. At every bunch of feathers the ghost stops to consider, "Is this the whole of my body or only a part of it?" The doubt gives him pause, and when at last he has made up his mind fully at all the bunches, and has further wasted valuable time by the zigzag course which he invariably pursues in going from one to another, the hunters are safe at home, and the bilked ghost may stalk in vain round about the village, which he is too timid to enter.

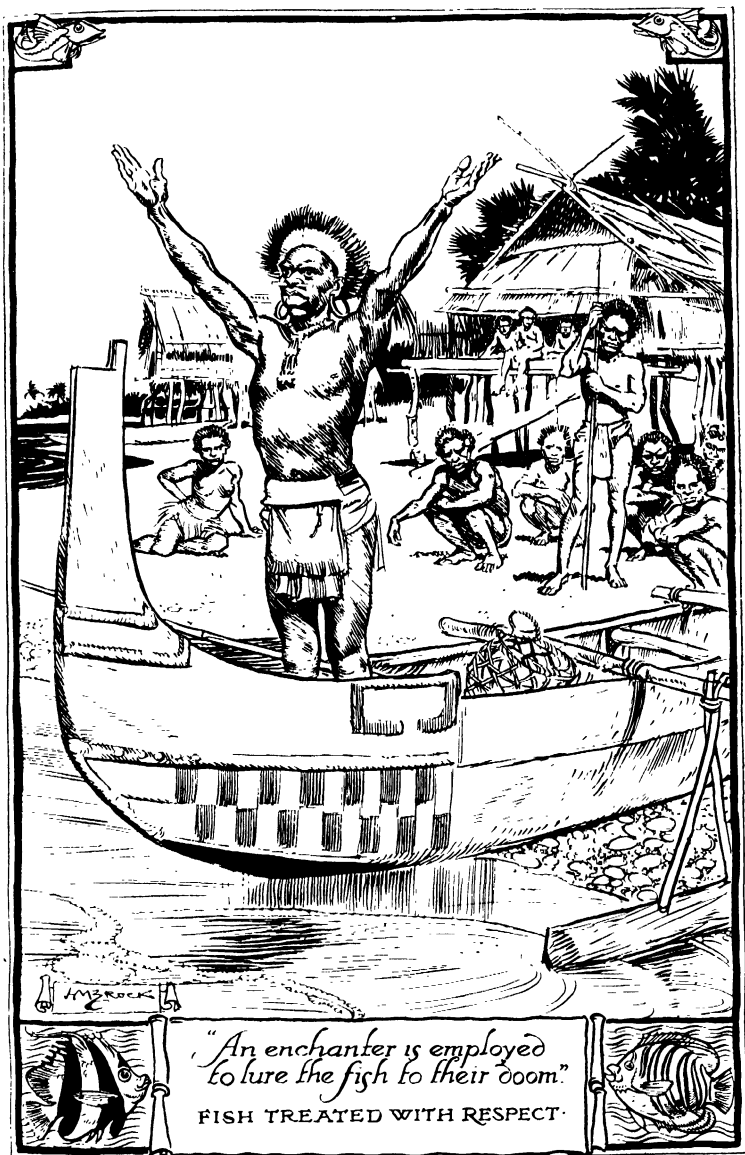
FISH TREATED WITH RESPECT

The Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia think that when a salmon is killed its soul returns to the salmon country. Hence they take care to throw the bones and offal into the sea, in order that the soul may reanimate them at the resurrection of the salmon. Whereas if they burned the bones the soul would be lost, and so it would be quite impossible for that salmon to rise from the dead. In like manner the Ottawa Indians of Canada, believing that the souls of dead fish passed into other bodies of fish, never burned fish bones, for fear of displeasing the souls of the fish, who would come no more to the nets. The Hurons also refrained from

QUAINT CUSTOMS

throwing fish bones into the fire, lest the souls of the fish should go and warn the other fish not to let themselves be caught, since the Hurons would burn their bones. Moreover, they had men who preached to the fish and persuaded them to come and be caught. A good preacher was much sought after, for they thought that the exhortations of a clever man had a great effect in drawing the fish to the nets. In the Huron fishing village where the French missionary Sagard stayed, the preacher to the fish prided himself very much on his eloquence, which was of a florid order. Every evening after supper, having seen that all the people were in their places and that a strict silence was observed, he preached to the fish. His text was that the Hurons did not burn fish bones. "Then enlarging on this theme with extraordinary unction, he exhorted and conjured and invited and implored the fish to come and be caught and to be of good courage and to fear nothing, for it was all to serve their friends who honoured them and did not burn their bones."

At Bogadjim in New Guinea an enchanter is employed to lure the fish to their doom. He stands in a canoe on the beach with a decorated fish-basket beside him, and commands the fish to come from all quarters to Bogadjim. When the Aino have killed a sword-fish, they thank the fish for allowing himself to be caught and invite him to come again. Among the Nootka Indians of British Columbia it was formerly a rule that any person who had partaken of bear's flesh must rigidly abstain from eating any kind of fish for a term of



FISH TREATED WITH RESPECT

two months. The motive for the abstinence was not any consideration for the health of the eater, but "a superstitious belief, that should any of their people after tasting bear's flesh, eat of fresh salmon, cod, etc., the fish, though at ever so great a distance off, would come to the knowledge of it, and be so much offended thereat, as not to allow themselves to be taken by any of the inhabitants." The disappearance of herring from the sea about Heligoland in 1530 was attributed by the fishermen to the misconduct of two lads who had whipped a freshly-caught herring and then flung it back into the sea. A similar disappearance of the herrings from the Moray Firth, in the reign of Queen Anne, was set down by some people to a breach of the Sabbath which had been committed by the fishermen, while others opined that it was due to a quarrel in which blood had been spilt in the sea. For Scotch fishermen are persuaded that if blood be drawn in a quarrel on the coast where herring are being caught, the shoal will at once take its departure and not return for that season at least. West Highland fishermen believe that every shoal of herring has its leader which it follows wherever he goes. This leader is twice as big as an ordinary herring, and the fishermen call it the king of herring. When they chance to catch it in their nets they put it back carefully into the sea; for they would esteem it petty treason to destroy the royal fish. The natives of the Duke of York Island annually decorate a canoe with flowers and ferns, lade it, or are supposed to lade it, with shell-money, and set it adrift to

QUAINT CUSTOMS

compensate the fish for their fellows who have been caught and eaten. When the Tarahumares of Mexico are preparing to poison the waters of a river for the purpose of stupefying and catching the fish, they take the precaution of first making offerings to the Master of the Fish by way of payment for the fish of which they are about to bereave him. The offerings consist of axes, hats, blankets, girdles, pouches, and especially knives and strings of beads, which are hung to a cross or a horizontal bar set up in the middle of the river. However, the Master of the Fish, who is thought to be the oldest fish, does not long enjoy these good things; for next morning the owners of the various articles remove them from the river and appropriate them to their usual secular purposes. It is especially necessary to treat the first fish caught with consideration in order to conciliate the rest of the fish, whose conduct may be supposed to be influenced by the reception given to those of their kind which were the first to be taken. Accordingly the Maoris always put back into the sea the first fish caught, "with a prayer that it may tempt other fish to come and be caught."

BIRTH OF THE GRAND LAMA

The Buddhist Tartars believe in a great number of living Buddhas, who officiate as Grand Lamas at the head of the most important monasteries. When one of these Grand Lamas dies his disciples do not

BIRTH OF THE GRAND LAMA

sorrow, for they know that he will soon reappear, being born in the form of an infant. Their only anxiety is to discover the place of his birth. If at this time they see a rainbow, they take it as a sign sent them by the departed Lama to guide them to his cradle. Sometimes the divine infant himself reveals his identity. "I am the Grand Lama," he says, "the living Buddha of such and such a temple. Take me to my old monastery. I am its immortal head." In whatever way the birthplace of the Buddha is revealed, whether by the Buddha's own avowal or by the sign in the sky, tents are struck, and the joyful pilgrims, often headed by the king or one of the most illustrious of the royal family, set forth to find and bring home the infant god. Generally he is born in Tibet, the holy land, and to reach him the caravan has often to traverse the most frightful deserts. When at last they find the child they fall down and worship him. Before, however, he is acknowledged as the Grand Lama whom they seek, he must satisfy them of his identity. He is asked the name of the monastery of which he claims to be the head, how far off it is, and how many monks live in it; he must also describe the habits of the deceased Grand Lama and the manner of his death. Then various articles, as prayer-books, tea-pots, and cups, are placed before him, and he has to point out those used by himself in his previous life. If he does so without a mistake his claims are admitted, and he is conducted in triumph to the monastery. At the head of all the Lamas is the Dalai Lama of Lhasa, the Rome of Tibet. He is



QUAINT CUSTOMS

regarded as a living god, and at death his divine and immortal spirit is born again in a child. According to some accounts the mode of discovering the Dalai Lama is similar to the method, already described, of discovering an ordinary Grand Lama. Other accounts speak of an election by drawing lots from a golden jar. Wherever he is born, the trees and plants put forth green leaves; at his bidding flowers bloom and springs of water rise; and his presence diffuses heavenly blessings. His palace stands on a commanding height; its gilded cupolas are seen sparkling in the sunlight for miles. In 1661 or 1662 Fathers Grueber and d'Orville, on their return from Peking to Europe, spent two months at Lhasa waiting for a caravan, and they report that the Grand Lama was worshipped as a true and living god, that he received the title of the Eternal and Heavenly Father, and that he was believed to have risen from the dead no less than seven times. He lived withdrawn from the business of this passing world in the recesses of his palace, where, seated aloft on a cushion and precious carpets, he received the homage of his adorers in a chamber screened from the garish eye of day, but glittering with gold and silver, and lit up by the blaze of a multitude of torches. His worshippers, with heads bowed to the earth, attested their veneration by kissing his feet.

KINGS OF FIRE AND WATER

KINGS OF FIRE AND WATER

In the backwoods of Cambodia live two mysterious sovereigns known as the King of the Fire and the King of the Water. Their fame is spread all over the south of the great Indo-Chinese peninsula; but only a faint echo of it has reached the West. Down to a few years ago no European, so far as is known, had ever seen either of them; and their very existence might have passed for a fable, were it not that till lately communications were regularly maintained between them and the King of Cambodia, who year by year exchanged presents with them. The Cambodian gifts were passed from tribe to tribe till they reached their destination; for no Cambodian would essay the long and perilous journey. The tribe amongst whom the Kings of Fire and Water reside is the Chréais or Jaray, a race with European features but a sallow complexion, inhabiting the forest-clad mountains and high tablelands which separate Cambodia from Annam. Their royal functions are of a purely mystic or spiritual order; they have no political authority; they are simple peasants, living by the sweat of their brow and the offerings of the faithful. According to one account they live in absolute solitude, never meeting each other and never seeing a human face. They inhabit successively seven towers perched upon seven mountains, and every year they pass from one tower to another. People come furtively and cast within their reach what is

QUAINT CUSTOMS

needful for their subsistence. The kingship lasts seven years, the time necessary to inhabit all the towers successively; but many die before their time is out. The offices are hereditary in one or (according to others) two royal families, who enjoy high consideration, have revenues assigned to them, and are exempt from the necessity of tilling the ground. But naturally the dignity is not coveted, and when a vacancy occurs, all eligible men (they must be strong and have children) flee and hide themselves. Another account, admitting the reluctance of the hereditary candidates to accept the crown, does not countenance the report of their hermit-like seclusion in the seven towers. For it represents the people as prostrating themselves before the mystic kings whenever they appear in public, it being thought that a terrible hurricane would burst over the country if this mark of homage were omitted. Probably, however, these are mere fables such as commonly shed a glamour of romance over the distant and unknown. A French officer, who had an interview with the redoubtable Fire King in February 1891, found him stretched on a bamboo couch, diligently smoking a long copper pipe, and surrounded by people who paid him no great deference. In spite of his mystic vocation the sorcerer had no charm or talisman about him, and was in no way distinguishable from his fellows except by his tall stature. Another writer reports that the two kings are much feared, because they are supposed to possess the evil eye; hence every one avoids them, and the potentates

KINGS OF FIRE AND WATER

considerately enough to announce their approach and to allow people to get out of their way. They enjoy extraordinary privileges and immunities, but their authority does not extend beyond the few villages of their neighbourhood. Like many other sacred kings, the Kings of Fire and Water are not allowed to die a natural death, for that would lower their reputation. Accordingly when one of them is seriously ill, the elders hold a consultation, and if they think he cannot recover they stab him to death. His body is burned and the ashes are piously collected and publicly honoured for five years. Part of them is given to the widow, and she keeps them in an urn, which she must carry on her back when she goes to weep on her husband's grave.

We are told that the Fire King, the more important of the two, whose supernatural powers have never been questioned, officiates at marriages, festivals, and sacrifices in honour of the *Yan* or spirit. On these occasions a special place is set apart for him; and the path by which he approaches is spread with white cotton cloths. A reason for confining the royal dignity to the same family is that this family is in possession of certain famous talismans which would lose their virtue or disappear if they passed out of the family. These talismans are three: the fruit of a creeper called *Cui*, gathered ages ago at the time of the last deluge, but still fresh and green; a rattan, also very old but bearing flowers that never fade; and lastly, a sword containing a *Yan* or spirit, who guards it constantly and works miracles with it. The spirit

QUAINT CUSTOMS

is said to be that of a slave, whose blood chanced to fall upon the blade while it was being forged, and who died a voluntary death to expiate his involuntary offence. By means of the two former talismans the Water King can raise a flood that would drown the whole earth. If the Fire King draws the magic sword a few inches from its sheath, the sun is hidden and men and beasts fall into a profound sleep; were he to draw it quite out of the scabbard, the world would come to an end. To this wondrous brand sacrifices of buffaloes, pigs, fowls, and ducks are offered for rain. It is kept swathed in cotton and silk; and amongst the annual presents sent by the King of Cambodia were rich stuffs to wrap the sacred sword.

In return the Kings of Fire and Water sent him a huge wax candle and two calabashes, one full of rice and the other of sesame. The candle bore the impress of the Fire King's middle finger, and was probably thought to contain the seed of fire, which the Cambodian monarch thus received once a year fresh from the Fire King himself. This holy candle was kept for sacred uses. On reaching the capital of Cambodia it was entrusted to the Brahmans, who laid it up beside the regalia, and with the wax made tapers which were burned on the altars on solemn days. As the candle was the special gift of the Fire King, we may conjecture that the rice and sesame were the special gift of the Water King. The latter was doubtless king of rain as well as of water, and the fruits of the earth were boons conferred by him on men. In times of

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

calamity, as during plague, floods, and war, a little of this sacred rice and sesame was scattered on the ground "to appease the wrath of the maleficent spirits." Contrary to the common usage of the country, which is to bury the dead, the bodies of both these mystic monarchs are burnt, but their nails and some of their teeth and bones are religiously preserved as amulets. It is while the corpse is being consumed on the pyre that the kinsmen of the deceased magician flee to the forest and hide themselves for fear of being elevated to the invidious dignity which he has just vacated. The people go and search for them, and the first whose lurking place they discover is made King of Fire or Water.

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

In Japan the souls of the departed return to their old homes once a year, and a festival called the Feast of Lanterns is made to welcome them. They come at evening on the thirteenth day of the seventh month of the old calendar, which falls towards the end of August. It is needful to light them on their way. Accordingly bamboos with pretty coloured lanterns attached to them are fastened on the tombs, and being thickly set they make an illumination on the hills, where the burying-grounds are generally situated. Lamps of many hues or rows of tapers are also lit and set out in front of the houses and in the gardens, and small fires are kindled in the streets, so that the whole city is in a blaze of light.

QUAINT CUSTOMS

After the sun has set, a great multitude issues from the town, for every family goes forth to meet its returning dead. When they come to the spot where they believe the souls to be, they welcome the unseen visitors and invite them to rest after their journey, and to partake of refreshments which they offer to them. Having allowed the souls time enough to satisfy their hunger and recover from their fatigue, they escort them by torchlight, chatting gaily with them, into the city and to the houses where they lived and died. These are also illuminated with brilliant lanterns; a banquet is spread on the tables; and the places of the dead, who are supposed to absorb the ethereal essence of the food, are laid for them as if they were alive. After the repast the living go from house to house to visit the souls of their dead friends and neighbours; and thus they spend the night running about the town. On the evening of the third day of the festival, which is the fifteenth day of the month, the time has come for the souls to return to their own place. Fires again blaze in the streets to light them on the road; the people again escort them ceremoniously to the spot where they met them two days before; and in some places they send the lanterns floating away on rivers or the sea in miniature boats, which are laden with provisions for the spirits on their way to their long home. But there is still a fear that some poor souls may have lagged behind, or even concealed themselves in a nook or corner, loath to part from the scenes of their former life and from those they love. Accordingly

THE SAVING VIRTUE OF A NAIL

steps are taken to hunt out these laggards and send them packing after their fellow-ghosts. With this intention the people throw stones on the roofs of their houses in great profusion; and going through every room armed with sticks they deal swashing blows all about them in the empty air to chase away the lingering souls. This they do, we are told, out of a regard for their own comfort quite as much as from the affection they bear to the dead; for they fear to be disturbed by unseasonable apparitions if they suffered the airy visitors to remain in the house.

THE SAVING VIRTUE OF A NAIL

In days when as yet Paris and London were not, when France still revered the Druids as the masters of all knowledge, human and divine, and when our own country was still covered with virgin forests, the home of savage beasts and savage men, a quaint ceremony was solemnly performed from time to time by the highest magistrate at Rome, to stay the ravages of pestilence or retrieve disaster that threatened the foundations of the national life. In the fourth century before our era the city of Rome was desolated by a great plague which raged for three years, carrying off some of the highest dignitaries and a great multitude of common folk. The historian who records the calamity informs us that when a banquet had been offered to the gods in vain, and neither human counsels nor divine help availed to mitigate the violence of the disease, it

QUAINT CUSTOMS

was resolved for the first time in Roman history to institute dramatical performances as an appropriate means of appeasing the wrath of the celestial powers. Accordingly actors were fetched from Etruria, who danced certain simple and decorous dances to the music of a flute. But even this novel spectacle failed to amuse or touch, to move to tears or laughter the sullen gods. The plague still raged, and at the very moment when the actors were playing their best in the circus beside the Tiber, the yellow river rose in angry flood and drove players and spectators, wading and splashing through the fast-deepening waters, away from the show. It was clear that the gods spurned plays as well as prayers and banquets; and in the general consternation it was felt that some more effectual measure should be taken to put an end to the scourge. Old men remembered that a plague had once been stayed by the knocking of a nail into a wall; and accordingly the Senate resolved that now in their extremity, when all other means had failed, a supreme magistrate should be appointed for the sole purpose of performing this solemn ceremony. The appointment was made, the nail was knocked, and the plague ceased, sooner or later. What better proof could be given of the saving virtue of a nail?

Twice more within the same century the Roman people had recourse to the same venerable ceremony as a cure for public calamities with which the ordinary remedies, civil and religious, seemed unable to cope. One of these occasions was a pestilence; the other was a strange mortality among the lead-

THE SAVING VIRTUE OF A NAIL

ing men, which public opinion traced, rightly or wrongly, to a series of nefarious crimes perpetrated by noble matrons, who took their husbands off by poison. The crimes, real or imaginary, were set down to frenzy, and nothing could be thought of so likely to minister to minds diseased as the knocking of a nail into a wall. Search among the annals of the city proved that in a season of civil discord, when the state had been rent by party feud, the same time-honoured remedy, the same soothing balm, had been applied with the happiest results to the jarring interests and heated passions of the disputants. Accordingly the old nostrum was tried once more, and again success appeared to justify the experiment.

If the Romans in the fourth century before Christ thus deemed it possible to rid themselves of pestilence, frenzy, and sedition by hammering them into a wall, even as French and German peasants still rid themselves of fever and toothache by knocking them into a tree, their prudent ancestors appear to have determined that so salutary a measure should not be restricted in its scope to meeting special and urgent emergencies as they arose, but should regularly diffuse its benefits over the community by anticipating and, as it were, nipping in the bud evils which, left unchecked, might grow to dangerous proportions. This, we may conjecture, was the original intention of an ancient Roman law which ordained that the highest magistrate of the republic should knock in a nail every year on the thirteenth day of September. The

QUAINT CUSTOMS

law might be seen, couched in old-fashioned language, engraved on a tablet which was fastened to a wall of the temple of Capitoline Jupiter; and although the place where the nails were driven in is nowhere definitely stated by classical writers, there are some grounds for thinking that it may have been the same wall on which the law that sanctioned the custom was exhibited. Livy tells us that the duty of affixing the nail, at one time discharged by the consuls, was afterwards committed to dictators, whose higher rank consorted better with the dignity and importance of the function. At a later time the custom fell into abeyance, and the ancient ceremony was revived only from time to time in seasons of grave peril or extraordinary calamity, which seemed to attest the displeasure of the gods at modern ways, and disposed men to bethink them of ancestral lore and to walk in the old paths.

PART IV
MYTHS AND LEGENDS

ST. ROMAIN DELIVERS ROUEN FROM THE DRAGON

FAMOUS was the dragon from which, according to legend, St. Romain delivered Rouen, and impressive was the ceremony with which, down to the French Revolution, the city commemorated its deliverance. The stately and beautiful edifices of the Middle Ages, which still adorn Rouen, formed a fitting background for a pageant which carried the mind back to the days when Henry II. of England and Richard Cœur-de-Lion, Dukes of Normandy, still had their palace in this ancient capital of their ancestral domains. Legend ran that about A.D. 520 a forest or marsh near the city was infested by a monstrous beast in the shape of a serpent or dragon, which every day wrought great harm to Rouen and its neighbourhood, devouring man and beast, causing boats and mariners on the river Seine to perish, and inflicting other woes innumerable on the commonwealth. At last the archbishop, St. Romain, resolved to beard the monster in his den. He could get none to accompany him but a prisoner condemned to death for murder. On their approach the dragon

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

made as though he would swallow them up; but the archbishop, relying on the divine help, made the sign of the cross, and at once the monster became so gentle that he suffered the saint to bind him with his stole and the murderer to lead him like a lamb to the slaughter. Thus they went in procession to a public place in Rouen, where the dragon was burnt in the presence of the people and its ashes cast into the river. The murderer was pardoned for his services; and the fame of the deed having gone abroad, St. Romain, or his successor St. Ouen, whose memory is enshrined in a church of dreamlike beauty at Rouen, obtained from King Dagobert in perpetuity a privilege for the archbishop, dean, and canons of the cathedral, to wit, that every year on Ascension Day, the anniversary of the miracle, they should pardon and release from prison a malefactor, whomsoever they chose, and whatever the crime of which he had been guilty. This privilege, unique in France, was claimed by the chapter of the cathedral as early as the beginning of the thirteenth century; for in 1210, the governor of the castle of Rouen having boggled at giving up a prisoner, the chapter appealed to King Philip Augustus, who caused an enquiry to be made into the claim. At this enquiry nine witnesses swore that never in the reigns of Henry II. and Richard Cœur-de-Lion, Dukes of Normandy, had there been any difficulty raised on the point in question. Henceforward the chapter seems to have enjoyed the right without opposition down to 1790, when it exercised its privilege of mercy for the last time.

ST. ROMAIN DELIVERS ROUEN

Next year the face of things had changed: there was neither archbishop nor chapter at Rouen. A register of the names of the prisoners who were pardoned, together with an account of their crimes, was kept and still exists. Only a few of the names in the thirteenth century are known, and there are many gaps in the first half of the fourteenth century; but from that time onward the register is nearly complete. Most of the crimes appear to have been murder or homicide.

The proceedings, on the great day of pardon, varied somewhat in different ages. The following account is based in great part on a description written in the reign of Henry III. and published at Rouen in 1587. Fifteen days before Ascension Day the canons of the cathedral summoned the king's officers to stop all proceedings against criminals detained in prison. Afterwards, on the Monday of Rogations, two canons examined the prisoners and took their confessions, going from prison to prison till Ascension Day. On that day, about seven o'clock in the morning, all the canons assembled in the chapter-house and invoked the grace of the Holy Spirit by the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and other prayers. Also they made oath to reveal none of the depositions of the criminals, but to hold them sacred under the seal of confession. The depositions having been taken and the commissioners heard, the chapter, after due deliberation, named him or her among the prisoners who was to receive the benefit of the privilege. A card bearing the prisoner's name and sealed with

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

the seal of the chapter was then sent to the members of parliament, who were sitting in full assembly, clad in their red robes, in the great hall of the palace to receive the nomination of the prisoner and to give it legal effect. The criminal was then released and pardoned. Immediately the minster bells began to ring, the doors of the cathedral were flung open, the organ pealed, hymns were sung, candles lit, and every solemnity observed in token of joy and gladness. Further, in presence of the conclave all the depositions of the other prisoners were burnt on the altar of the chapter-house. Then the archbishop and the whole of the clergy of the cathedral went in procession to the great square known as the Old Tower near the river, carrying the shrines and reliquaries of the minster, and accompanied by the joyous music of hautboys and clarions. Apparently the Old Tower occupies the site of the ancient castle of the Dukes of Normandy, and the custom of going thither in procession came down from a time when the prisoners were detained in the castle dungeons. In the square there stood, and still stands, a platform of stone raised high above the ground and approached by flights of steps. Thither they brought the shrine (*ferte*) of St. Romain, and thither too was led the pardoned prisoner. He ascended the platform, and after confessing his sins and receiving absolution he thrice lifted the shrine of St. Romain, while the innumerable multitude assembled in the square cried aloud, each time the shrine was lifted, "Noel! Noel! Noel!" which was understood to mean "God be with us!" That

ST. ROMAIN DELIVERS ROUEN

done, the procession re-formed and returned to the cathedral. At the head walked a beadle clad in violet, who bore on a pole the wicker effigy of the winged dragon of Notre Dame, holding a large fish in its mouth. The whispers and cries excited by the appearance of the monster were drowned in the loud fanfares of cornets, clarions, and trumpets. Behind the musicians, who wore the liveries of the Master of the Brotherhood of Notre Dame with his arms emblazoned on an ensign of taffeta, came the carved silver-gilt shrine of Notre Dame. After it followed the clergy of the cathedral to the number of two hundred, clad in robes of violet or crimson silk, bearing banners, crosses, and shrines, and chanting the hymn *De resurrectione Domini*. Then came the archbishop, giving his blessing to the great multitude who thronged the streets. The prisoner himself walked behind, bareheaded, crowned with flowers, carrying one end of the litter which supported the shrine of St. Romain; the fetters he had worn hung from the litter; and with him paced, with lighted torches in their hands, the men or women who, for the last seven years, had in like manner received their pardon. Another beadle, in a violet livery, marched behind bearing aloft on a pole the wicker effigy of the dragon (*Gargouille*) destroyed by St. Romain; in its mouth the dragon sometimes held a live animal, such as a young fox, a rabbit, or a sucking pig, and it was attended by the Brotherhood of the Gargouillards. The clergy of the thirty-two parishes of Rouen also took part in the procession, which moved from the Old

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

Tower to the cathedral amid the acclamations of the crowd, while from every church tower in the city the bells rang out a joyous peal, the great *Georges d'Amboise* thundering above them all. After mass had been performed in the cathedral, the prisoner was taken to the house of the Master of the Brotherhood of St. Romain, where he was magnificently feasted, lodged, and served, however humble his rank. Next morning he again presented himself to the chapter, where, kneeling in the presence of a great assembly, he was severely reproved for his sins and admonished to give thanks to God, to St. Romain, and to the canons for the pardon he had received in virtue of the privilege.

ISIS AND THE SUN GOD

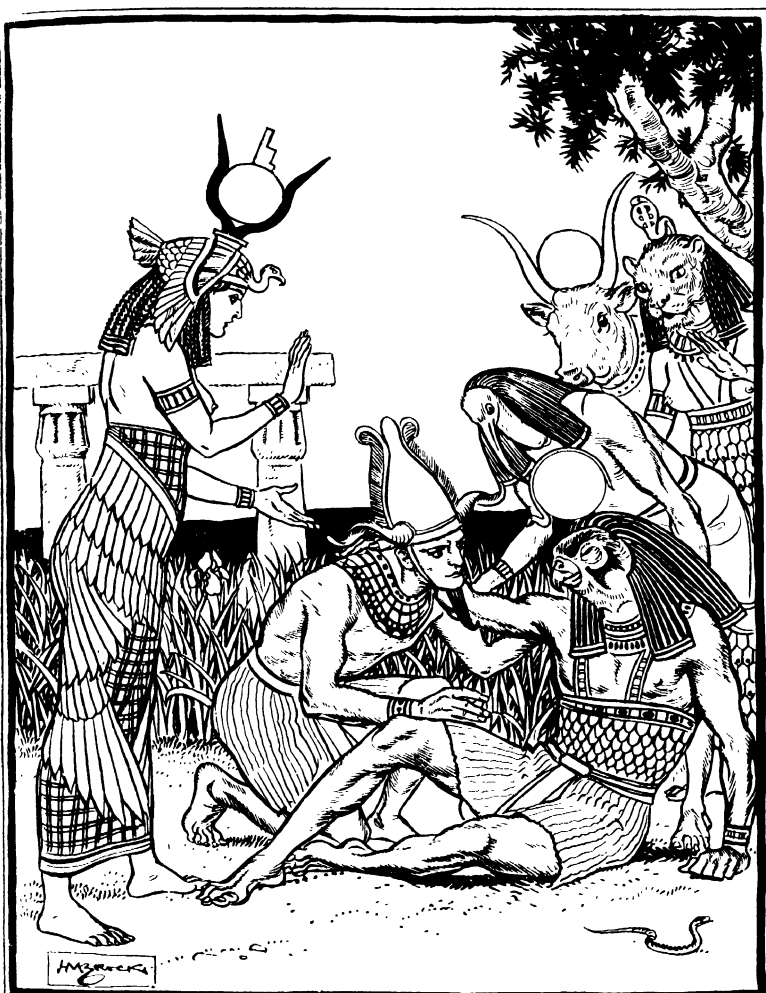
Primitive man creates his gods in his own image. Xenophanes remarked long ago that the complexion of negro gods was black and their noses flat; that Thracian gods were ruddy and blue-eyed; and that if horses, oxen, and lions only believed in gods and had hands wherewith to portray them, they would doubtless fashion their deities in the form of horses, and oxen, and lions. Hence just as the furtive savage conceals his real name because he fears that sorcerers might make an evil use of it, so he fancies that his gods must likewise keep their true names secret, lest other gods or even men should learn the mystic sounds and thus be able to conjure with them. Nowhere was this crude conception

ISIS AND THE SUN GOD

of the secrecy and magical virtue of the divine name more firmly held or more fully developed than in ancient Egypt, where the superstitions of a dateless past were embalmed in the hearts of the people hardly less effectually than the bodies of cats and crocodiles and the rest of the divine menagerie in their rock-cut tombs. The conception is well illustrated by a story which tells how the subtle Isis wormed his secret name from Ra, the great Egyptian god of the sun. Isis, so runs the tale, was a woman mighty in words, and she was weary of the world of men, and yearned after the world of the gods. And she meditated in her heart, saying, "Cannot I by virtue of the great name of Ra make myself a goddess and reign like him in heaven and earth?" For Ra had many names, but the great name which gave him all power over gods and men was known to none but himself. Now the god was by this time grown old; he slobbered at the mouth and his spittle fell upon the ground. So Isis gathered up the spittle and the earth with it, and kneaded thereof a serpent and laid it in the path where the great god passed every day to his double kingdom after his heart's desire. And when he came forth according to his wont, attended by all his company of gods, the sacred serpent stung him, and the god opened his mouth and cried, and his cry went up to heaven. And the company of gods cried, "What aileth thee?" and the gods shouted, "Lo and behold!" But he could not answer; his jaws rattled, his limbs shook, the poison ran through his flesh as the Nile floweth

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

over the land. When the great god had stilled his heart, he cried to his followers, "Come to me, O my children, offspring of my body. I am a prince, the son of a prince, the divine seed of a god. My father devised my name; my father and my mother gave me my name, and it remained hidden in my body since my birth, that no magician might have magic power over me. I went out to behold that which I have made, I walked in the two lands which I have created, and lo! something stung me. What it was, I know not. Was it fire? was it water? My heart is on fire, my flesh trembleth, all my limbs do quake. Bring me the children of the gods with healing words and understanding lips, whose power reacheth to heaven." Then came to him the children of the gods, and they were very sorrowful. And Isis came with her craft, whose mouth is full of the breath of life, whose spells chase pain away, whose word maketh the dead to live. She said, "What is it, divine Father? what is it?" The holy god opened his mouth, he spake and said, "I went upon my way, I walked after my heart's desire in the two regions which I have made to behold that which I have created, and lo! a serpent that I saw not stung me. Is it fire? is it water? I am colder than water, I am hotter than fire, all my limbs sweat, I tremble, mine eye is not steadfast, I behold not the sky, the moisture bedeweth my face as in summer-time." Then spake Isis, "Tell me thy name, divine Father, for the man shall live who is called by his name." Then answered Ra, "I created the heavens and the earth, I ordered the



She said,
"What is it, divine Father?"
 • ISIS AND THE SUN GOD •



THE DEATH OF ADONIS

mountains, I made the great and wide sea, I stretched out the two horizons like a curtain. I am he who openeth his eyes and it is light, and who shutteth them and it is dark. At his command the Nile riseth, but the gods know not his name. I am Khepera in the morning, I am Ra at noon, I am Tum at eve." But the poison was not taken away from him; it pierced deeper, and the great god could no longer walk. Then said Isis to him, "That was not thy name that thou spakest unto me. Oh tell it me, that the poison may depart; for he shall live whose name is named." Now the poison burned like fire, it was hotter than the flame of fire. The god said, "I consent that Isis shall search into me, and that my name shall pass from my breast into hers." Then the god hid himself from the gods, and his place in the ship of eternity was empty. Thus was the name of the great god taken from him, and Isis, the witch, spake, "Flow away poison, depart from Ra. It is I, even I, who overcome the poison and cast it to the earth; for the name of the great god hath been taken away from him. Let Ra live and let the poison die." Thus spake great Isis, the queen of the gods, she who knows Ra and his true name.

THE DEATH OF ADONIS

The scarlet anemone is said to have sprung from the blood of Adonis, or to have been stained by it. The name of the flower is probably derived from

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

Naaman ("darling"), which seems to have been an epithet of Adonis. The Arabs still call the anemone "wounds of the Naaman." The red rose also was said to owe its hue to the same sad occasion; for Aphrodite, hastening to Adonis, her wounded lover, trod on a bush of white roses; the cruel thorns tore her tender flesh, and her sacred blood dyed the white roses for ever red. It would be idle, perhaps, to lay much weight on evidence drawn from the calendar of flowers, and in particular to press an argument so fragile as the bloom of the rose. Yet so far as it counts at all, the tale which links the damask rose with the death of Adonis points to a summer rather than to a spring celebration of his passion. In Attica, certainly, the festival fell at the height of summer. For the fleet which Athens fitted out against Syracuse, and by the destruction of which her power was permanently crippled, sailed at midsummer, and by an ominous coincidence the sombre rites of Adonis were being celebrated at the very time. As the troops marched down to the harbour to embark, the streets through which they passed were lined with coffins and corpse-like effigies, and the air was rent with the noise of women wailing for the dead Adonis. The circumstance cast a gloom over the sailing of the most splendid armament that Athens ever sent to sea. Many ages afterwards, when the Emperor Julian made his first entry into Antioch, he found in like manner the gay, the luxurious capital of the East plunged in mimic grief for the annual death of Adonis; and if he had any presentiment of coming evil, the voices

PERSEPHONE AND DEMETER

of lamentation which struck upon his ear must have seemed to sound his knell.

PERSEPHONE AND DEMETER

The youthful Persephone, so runs the tale, was gathering roses and lilies, crocuses and violets, hyacinths and narcissuses in a lush meadow, when the earth gaped and Pluto, lord of the Dead, issuing from the abyss carried her off on his golden car to be his bride and queen in the gloomy subterranean world. Her sorrowing mother Demeter, with her yellow tresses veiled in a dark mourning mantle, sought her over land and sea, and learning from the Sun her daughter's fate, she withdrew in high dudgeon from the gods and took up her abode at Eleusis, where she presented herself to the King's daughters in the guise of an old woman, sitting sadly under the shadow of an olive tree beside the Maiden's Well, to which the damsels had come to draw water in bronze pitchers for their father's house. In her wrath at her bereavement the goddess suffered not the seed to grow in the earth but kept it hidden under ground, and she vowed that never would she set foot on Olympus and never would she let the corn sprout till her lost daughter should be restored to her. Vainly the oxen dragged the ploughs to and fro in the fields; vainly the sower dropped the barley seed in the brown furrows; nothing came up from the parched and crumbling soil. Even the Rarian plain near Eleusis, which

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

was wont to wave with yellow harvests, lay bare and fallow. Mankind would have perished of hunger and the gods would have been robbed of the sacrifices which were their due, if Zeus in alarm had not commanded Pluto to disgorge his prey, to restore his bride Persephone to her mother Demeter. The grim lord of the Dead smiled and obeyed, but before he sent back his queen to the upper air on a golden car, he gave her the seed of a pomegranate to eat, which ensured that she would return to him. But Zeus stipulated that henceforth Persephone should spend two-thirds of every year with her mother and the gods in the upper world and one-third of the year with her husband in the nether world, from which she was to return year by year when the earth was gay with spring flowers. Gladly the daughter then returned to the sunshine, gladly her mother received her and fell upon her neck; and in her joy at recovering the lost one Demeter made the corn to sprout from the clods of the ploughed fields and all the broad earth to be heavy with leaves and blossoms.

HOW THE SEA DYAKS LEARNT TO PLANT RICE

The Sea Dyaks explain how they first came to plant rice and to revere the omen-birds which play so important a part in Dyak life. Long, long ago, so runs the tale, when rice was yet unknown, and the Dyaks lived on tapioca, yams, potatoes, and

THE SEA DYAKS AND RICE

such fruits as they could procure, a handsome young chief named Siu went out into the forest with his blow-pipe to shoot birds. He wandered without seeing a bird or meeting an animal till the sun was sinking in the west. Then he came to a wild fig-tree covered with ripe fruit, which a swarm of birds of all kinds were busy pecking at. Never in his life had he seen so many birds together! It seemed as if all the fowls of the forest were gathered in the boughs of that tree. He killed a great many with the poisoned darts of his blow-pipe, and putting them in his basket started for home. But he lost his way in the wood, and the night had fallen before he saw the lights and heard the usual sounds of a Dyak house. Hiding his blow-pipe and the dead birds in the jungle, he went up the ladder into the house, but what was his surprise to find it apparently deserted. There was no one in the long verandah, and of the people whose voices he had heard a minute before not one was to be seen. Only in one of the many rooms, dimly lighted, he found a beautiful girl, who prepared for him his evening meal. Now though Siu did not know it, the house was the house of the great Singalang Burong, the Ruler of the Spirit World. He could turn himself and his followers into any shape. When they went forth against an enemy they took the form of birds for the sake of speed, and flew over the tall trees, the broad rivers, and even the sea. But in his own house and among his own people Singalang Burong appeared as a man. He had eight daughters, and the girl who cooked Siu's food for him was the

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

youngest. The reason why the house was so still and deserted was that the people were in mourning for some of their relatives who had just been killed, and the men had gone out to take human heads in revenge. Siu stayed in the house for a week, and then the girl, whose pet name was Bunsu Burong, or "the youngest of the bird family," agreed to marry him; but she said he must promise never to kill or hurt a bird or even to hold one in his hands; for if he did, she would be his wife no more. Siu promised, and together they returned to his people.

There they lived happily, and Siu's wife had a son whom they named Seragunting. One day when the boy had grown wonderfully tall and strong for his years and was playing with his fellows, a man brought some birds which he had caught in a trap. Forgetting the promise he had made to his wife, Siu asked the man to shew him the birds, and taking one of them in his hand he stroked it. His wife saw it and was sad at heart. She took the pitchers and went as though she would fetch water from the well. But she never came back. Siu and his son sought her, sorrowing, for days. At last after many adventures they came to the house of the boy's grandfather, Singalang Burong, the Ruler of the Spirit World. There they found the lost wife and mother, and there they stayed for a time. But the heart of Siu yearned to his old home. He would fain have persuaded his wife to return with him, but she would not. So at last he and his son went back alone. But before he went he learned from his father-in-law how to plant rice, and how

THE SERPENT CREST OF NAGPUR

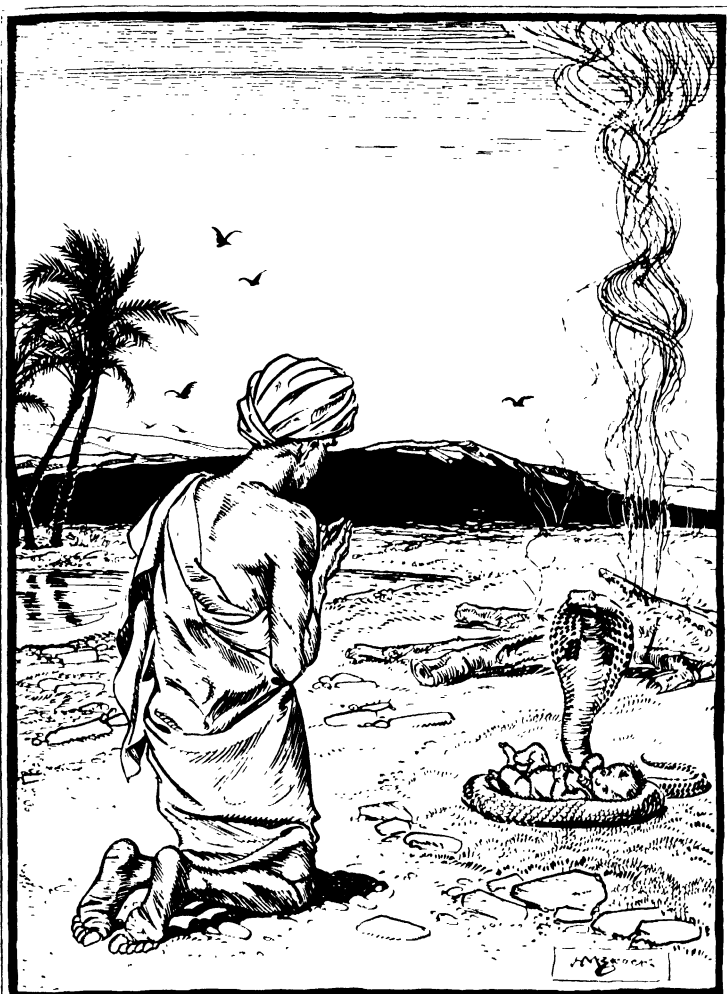
to revere the sacred birds, and to draw omens from them. These birds were named after the sons-in-law of the Ruler of the Spirit World and were the appointed means whereby he made known his wishes to mankind. That is how the Sea Dyaks learned to plant rice and to honour the omen-birds.

WHY THE RAJAHS OF NAGPUR HAVE THE SERPENT FOR THEIR CREST

The crest of the Maharajah of Nagpur is a cobra with a human face under its expanded hood, surrounded by all the insignia of royalty. Moreover, the Rajah and the chief members of his family always wear turbans so arranged that they resemble a coiled serpent with its head projecting over the wearer's brow. To explain this serpent badge a tale is told which conforms to the type of Beauty and the Beast. Once upon a time a Nag or serpent named Pundarika took upon himself the likeness of a Brahman, and repaired in that guise to the house of a real Brahman at Benares, in order to perfect himself in a knowledge of the sacred books. The teacher was so pleased with the progress made by his pupil that he gave him his only child, the beautiful Parvati, to wife. But the subtle serpent, though he could assume any form at pleasure, was unable to rid himself of his forked tongue and foul breath. To conceal these personal blemishes from his wife was always his aim. One night, however, she discovered his unpleasant peculiarities. She

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

questioned him sharply, and to divert her attention he proposed that they should make a pilgrimage to Juggernaut. The idea of visiting that fashionable watering-place so raised the lady's spirits that she quite forgot to pursue the enquiry. However, on their way home her curiosity revived, and she repeated her questions under circumstances which rendered it impossible for the serpent, as a tender husband, to evade them, though well he knew that the disclosure he was about to make would sever him, the immortal, at once and for ever from his mortal wife. He related the wondrous tale, and, plunging into a pool, disappeared from sight. His poor wife was inconsolable at his hurried departure, and in the midst of her grief and remorse her child was born. But instead of rejoicing at the birth, she made for herself a funeral pyre and perished in the flames. At that moment a Brahman appeared on the scene, and perceived the forsaken babe lying sheltered and guarded by a great hooded snake. It was the serpent father protecting his child. Addressing the Brahman, he narrated his history, and foretold that the child should be called Phani-Makuta Raya, that is, "the snake crowned," and that he should reign as rajah over the country to be called Nagpur. That is why the rajahs of Nagpur have the serpent for their crest.



*The serpent father protecting
his child.*
THE RAJAHS OF NAGPUR.



KING ATHAMAS

KING ATHAMAS

Once upon a time Athamas, the king of a country in ancient Greece, married a wife Nephele, and had a son called Phrixus and a daughter named Helle. Afterwards he took to himself a second wife called Ino, and he had two sons, Learchus and Melicertes. But his second wife was jealous of her step-children, Phrixus and Helle, and plotted their death. She went about very cunningly to compass her bad end. First of all she persuaded the women of the country to roast the seed corn secretly before it was committed to the ground. So next year no crops came up and the people died of famine. Then the king sent messengers to the oracle at Delphi to enquire the cause of the dearth. But the wicked step-mother bribed the messenger to give out as the answer of the god that the dearth would never cease till the children of Athamas' first wife had been sacrificed to Zeus. When Athamas heard that, he sent for the children, who were with the sheep. But a ram with a fleece of gold opened his lips, and speaking with the voice of a man warned the children of their danger. So they mounted the ram and fled with him over land and sea. As they flew over the sea, the girl slipped from the animal's back, and falling into water was drowned. But her brother Phrixus was brought safe to the land of Colchis, where reigned a child of the Sun. Phrixus married the king's daughter, and they had a son Cytisorus. He sacrificed the ram with the golden

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

fleece to Zeus the God of Flight. The golden fleece itself he gave to his wife's father, who nailed it to an oak tree, guarded by a sleepless dragon in a sacred grove of Ares. Meanwhile at home an oracle had commanded that King Athamas himself should be sacrificed as an expiatory offering for the whole country. So the people decked him with garlands like a victim and led him to the altar, where they were just about to sacrifice him when he was rescued either by his grandson Cytisorus, who arrived in the nick of time from Colchis, or by Hercules, who brought tidings that the king's son Phrixus was yet alive. Thus Athamas was saved, but afterwards he went mad, and mistaking his son Learchus for a wild beast shot him dead. Next he attempted the life of his remaining son Melicertes, but the child was rescued by his mother Ino, who ran and threw herself and him from a high rock into the sea. Mother and son were changed into marine divinities, and the son received special homage in the isle of Tenedos, where babes were sacrificed to him. Thus bereft of wife and children the unhappy Athamas quitted his country, and on enquiring of the oracle where he should dwell was told to take up his abode wherever he should be entertained by wild beasts. He fell in with a pack of wolves devouring sheep, and when they saw him they fled and left him remnants of their prey. In this way the oracle was fulfilled. But because King Athamas had not been sacrificed as a sin-offering for the whole country, it was divinely decreed that the eldest male scion of his family in each genera-



*"So they mounted the ram and fled
with him over land and sea"*
• KING ATHAMAS •

KING VIKRAMADITYA

tion should be sacrificed without fail, if ever he set foot in the town-hall, where the offerings were made to Zeus by one of the house of Athamas. Many of the family, Xerxes was informed, had fled to foreign lands to escape this doom; but some of them had returned long afterwards, and being caught by the sentinels in the act of entering the town-hall were wreathed as victims, led forth in procession, and sacrificed.

KING VIKRAMADITYA

A story is told of Ujjain, the ancient capital of Mlawa in Western India, where the renowned King Vikramaditya is said to have held his court, gathering about him a circle of poets and scholars. Tradition has it that once on a time an arch-fiend, with a legion of devils at his command, took up his abode in Ujjain, the inhabitants of which he vexed and devoured. Many had fallen a prey to him, and others had abandoned the country to save their lives. The once populous city was fast being converted into a desert. At last the principal citizens, meeting in council, besought the fiend to reduce his rations to one man a day, who would be duly delivered up to him in order that the rest might enjoy a day's repose. The demon closed with the offer, but required that the man whose turn it was to be sacrificed should mount the throne and exercise the royal power for a single day, all the grandees of the kingdom submitting to his

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

commands, and everybody yielding him the most absolute obedience. Necessity obliged the citizens to accept these hard terms; their names were entered on a list; every day one of them in his turn ruled from morning to night, and was then devoured by the demon.

Now it happened by great good luck that a caravan of merchants from Gujerat halted on the banks of a river not far from the city. They were attended by a servant who was no other than Vikramaditya. At nightfall the jackals began to howl as usual, and one of them said in his own tongue, "In two hours a human corpse will shortly float down this river, with four rubies of great price at his belt, and a turquois ring on his finger. He who will give me that corpse to devour will bear sway over the seven lands." Vikramaditya, knowing the language of birds and beasts, understood what the jackal said, gave the corpse to the beast to devour, and took possession of the ring and the rubies. Next day he entered the town, and, traversing the streets, observed a troop of horse under arms, forming a royal escort, at the door of a potter's house. The grandees of the city were there, and with them was the garrison. They were in the act of inducing the son of the potter to mount an elephant and proceed in state to the palace. But strange to say, instead of being pleased at the honour conferred on their son, the potter and his wife stood on the threshold weeping and sobbing most bitterly. Learning how things stood, the chivalrous Vikramaditya was touched with pity, and

KING VIKRAMADITYA

offered to accept the fatal sovereignty instead of the potter's son, saying that he would either deliver the people from the tyranny of the demon or perish in the attempt. Accordingly he donned the kingly robes, assumed all the badges of sovereignty, and, mounting the elephant, rode in great pomp to the palace, where he seated himself on the throne, while the dignitaries of the kingdom discharged their duties in his presence. At night the fiend arrived as usual to eat him up. But Vikramaditya was more than a match for him, and after a terrific combat the fiend capitulated and agreed to quit the city. Next morning the people on coming to the palace were astonished to find Vikramaditya still alive. They thought he must be no common mortal, but some superhuman being, or the descendant of a great king. Grateful to him for their deliverance they bestowed the kingdom on him, and he reigned happily over them.

PART V
STORIES

THE MILLER'S WIFE AND THE TWO GREY CATS

IN Silesia they tell of a miller's apprentice, a sturdy and industrious young fellow, who set out on his travels. One day he came to a mill, and the miller told him that he wanted an apprentice but did not care to engage one, because hitherto all his apprentices had run away in the night, and when he came down in the morning the mill was at a stand. However, he liked the looks of the young chap and took him into his pay. But what the new apprentice heard about the mill and his predecessors was not encouraging; so the first night when it was his duty to watch in the mill he took care to provide himself with an axe and a prayer-book, and while he kept one eye on the whirring, humming wheels he kept the other on the good book, which he read by the flickering light of a candle set on a table. So the hours at first passed quietly with nothing to disturb him but the monotonous drone and click of the machinery. But on the stroke of twelve, as he was still reading with the axe lying on the table within reach, the door opened and in came two grey cats mewing, an old one and a young one.

STORIES

They sat down opposite him, but it was easy to see that they did not like his wakefulness and the prayer-book and the axe. Suddenly the old cat reached out a paw and made a grab at the axe, but the young chap was too quick for her and held it fast. Then the young cat tried to do the same for the prayer-book, but the apprentice gripped it tight. Thus balked, the two cats set up such a squalling that the young fellow could hardly say his prayers. Just before one o'clock the younger cat sprang on the table and fetched a blow with her right paw at the candle to put it out. But the apprentice struck at her with his axe and sliced the paw off, whereupon the two cats vanished with a frightful screech. The apprentice wrapped the paw up in paper to shew it to his master. Very glad the miller was next morning when he came down and found the mill going and the young chap at his post. The apprentice told him what had happened in the night and gave him the parcel containing the cat's paw. But when the miller opened it, what was the astonishment of the two to find in it no cat's paw, but a woman's hand! At breakfast the miller's young wife did not as usual take her place at the table. She was ill in bed, and the doctor had to be called in to bind up her right arm, because in hewing wood, so they said, she had made a slip and cut off her own right hand. But the apprentice packed up his traps and turned his back on that mill before the sun had set.



"Struck at her with his axe"

• THE MILLER'S WIFE
& THE TWO GREY CATS •

PUNCHKIN AND THE PARROT

PUNCHKIN AND THE PARROT

A Hindoo story tells how a magician called Punchkin held a queen captive for twelve years, and would fain marry her, but she would not have him. At last the queen's son came to rescue her, and the two plotted together to kill Punchkin. So the queen spoke the magician fair, and pretended that she had at last made up her mind to marry him. "And do tell me," she said, "are you quite immortal? Can death never touch you? And are you too great an enchanter ever to feel human suffering?" "It is true," he said, "that I am not as others. Far, far away, hundreds of thousands of miles from this, there lies a desolate country covered with thick jungle. In the midst of the jungle grows a circle of palm trees, and in the centre of the circle stand six chattees full of water, piled one above another: below the sixth chattee is a small cage, which contains a little green parrot;—on the life of the parrot depends my life;—and if the parrot is killed I must die. It is, however," he added, "impossible that the parrot should sustain any injury, both on account of the inaccessibility of the country, and because, by my appointment, many thousand genii surround the palm trees, and kill all who approach the place." But the queen's young son overcame all difficulties, and got possession of the parrot. He brought it to the door of the magician's palace, and began playing with it. Punchkin, the magician, saw him and, coming out,

STORIES

tried to persuade the boy to give him the parrot. "Give me my parrot!" cried Punchkin. Then the boy took hold of the parrot and tore off one of his wings; and as he did so the magician's right arm fell off. Punchkin then stretched out his left arm, crying, "Give me my parrot!" The prince pulled off the parrot's second wing, and the magician's left arm tumbled off. "Give me my parrot!" cried he, and fell on his knees. The prince pulled off the parrot's right leg, the magician's right leg fell off; the prince pulled off the parrot's left leg, down fell the magician's left. Nothing remained of him except the trunk and the head; but still he rolled his eyes, and cried, "Give me my parrot!" "Take your parrot, then," cried the boy; and with that he wrung the bird's neck, and threw it at the magician; and, as he did so, Punchkin's head twisted round, and, with a fearful groan, he died!

KOSHCHEI THE DEATHLESS

A certain warlock called Koshchei the Deathless carried off a princess and kept her prisoner in his golden castle. However, a prince made up to her one day as she was walking alone and disconsolate in the castle garden, and cheered by the prospect of escaping with him she went to the warlock and coaxed him with false and flattering words, saying, "My dearest friend, tell me, I pray you, will you never die?" "Certainly not," says he. "Well," says she, "and where is your death? is it in your

KOSHCHEI THE DEATHLESS

dwelling?" "To be sure it is," says he; "it is in the broom under the threshold." Thereupon the princess seized the broom and threw it on the fire, but although the broom burned, the deathless Koshchei remained alive; indeed, not so much as a hair of him was singed. Balked in her first attempt, the artful woman pouted and said, "You do not love me true, for you have not told me where your death is; yet I am not angry, but love you with all my heart." With these fawning words she besought the warlock to tell her truly where his death was. So he laughed and said, "Why do you wish to know? Well, then, out of love I will tell you where it lies. In a certain field there stand three green oaks, and under the roots of the largest oak is a worm, and if ever this worm is found and crushed, that instant I shall die." When the princess heard these words, she went straight to her lover and told him all; and he searched till he found the oaks and dug up the worm and crushed it. Then he hurried to the warlock's castle, but only to learn from the princess that the warlock was still alive. Then she fell to wheedling and coaxing Koshchei once more, and this time, overcome by her wiles, he opened his heart to her and told her the truth. "My death," said he, "is far from here and hard to find, on the wide ocean. In that sea is an island, and on the island there grows a green oak, and beneath the oak is an iron chest, and in the chest is a small basket, and in the basket is a hare, and in the hare is a duck, and in the duck is an egg; and he who finds the egg and breaks it, kills me at

STORIES

the same time." The prince naturally procured the fateful egg, and with it in his hands he confronted the deathless warlock. The monster would have killed him, but the prince began to squeeze the egg. At that the warlock shrieked with pain, and turning to the false princess, who stood by smirking and smiling, "Was it not out of love for you," said he, "that I told you where my death was? And is this the return you make to me?" With that he grabbed at his sword, which hung from a peg on the wall; but before he could reach it, the prince had crushed the egg, and sure enough the deathless warlock found his death at the same moment.

THE DRAGON OF THE WATER-MILL

A dragon resided in a water-mill, and ate up two king's sons, one after the other. The third son went out to seek his brothers, and coming to the water-mill he found nobody in it but an old woman. She revealed to him the dreadful character of the being that kept the mill, and how he had devoured the prince's two elder brothers, and she implored him to go away home before the same fate should overtake him. But he was both brave and cunning, and he said to her, "Listen well to what I am going to say to you. Ask the dragon whither he goes and where his strength is; then kiss all that place where he tells you his strength is, as if from love, till you find it out, and afterwards tell me when I come." So when the dragon came in, the old woman began

THE DRAGON OF THE WATER-MILL

to question him, "Where in God's name have you been? Whither do you go so far? You will never tell me whither you go." The dragon replied, "Well, my dear old woman, I do go far." Then the old woman coaxed him, saying, "And why do you go so far? Tell me where your strength is. If I knew where your strength is, I don't know what I should do for love; I would kiss all that place." Thereupon the dragon smiled and said to her, "Yonder is my strength, in that fireplace." Then the old woman began to fondle and kiss the fireplace; and the dragon on seeing it burst into a laugh. "Silly old woman," he said, "my strength is not there. It is in the tree-fungus in front of the house." Then the old woman began to fondle and kiss the tree; but the dragon laughed again and said to her, "Away, old woman! my strength is not there." "Then where is it?" asked the old woman. "My strength," said he, "is a long way off, and you cannot go thither. Far in another kingdom under the king's city is a lake; in the lake is a dragon; in the dragon is a boar; in the boar is a pigeon, and in the pigeon is my strength." The murder was now out; so next morning when the dragon went away from the mill to attend to his usual business of eating people up, the prince came to the old woman and she let him into the secret of the dragon's strength. The prince accordingly set off to find the lake in the far country and the other dragon that lived in it. He found them both at last; the lake was a still and lonely water surrounded by green meadows, where flocks of sheep

STORIES

nibbled the sweet lush grass. The hero tucked up his hose and his sleeves, and wading out into the lake called aloud on the dragon to come forth and fight. Soon the monster emerged from the water, slimy and dripping, his scaly back glistening in the morning sun. The two grappled and wrestled from morning to afternoon of a long summer day. What with the heat of the weather and the violence of his exertions the dragon was quite exhausted, and said, "Let me go, prince, that I may moisten my parched head in the lake and toss you to the sky." But the prince sternly refused; so the dragon relaxed his grip and sank under the water, which bubbled and gurgled over the place where he plunged into the depths. When he had disappeared and the ripples had subsided on the surface, you would never have suspected that under that calm water, reflecting the green banks, the white, straying sheep, the blue sky, and the fleecy gold-flecked clouds of a summer evening, there lurked so ferocious and dangerous a monster. Next day the combat was renewed with the very same result. But on the third day the hero, fortified by a kiss from the fair daughter of the king of the land, tossed the dragon high in air, and when the monster fell with a most tremendous thud on the water he burst into little bits. Out of the pieces sprang a boar, which ran away as fast as it could lay legs to the ground. But the prince sent sheep-dogs after it which caught it up and rent it in pieces. Out of the pieces sprang a pigeon; but the prince let loose a falcon, which stooped on the pigeon, seized



"Tossed the dragon high in air"
THE DRAGON of the WATERMILL.



TRUE STEEL

it in its talons, and brought it to the prince. In the pigeon was the life of the dragon who kept the mill, so, before inflicting on the monster the doom he so richly merited, the prince questioned him as to the fate of his two elder brothers who had perished at the hands, or rather under the claws and fangs, of the dragon. Having ascertained how to restore them to life and to release a multitude of other victims whom the dragon kept prisoners in a vault under the water-mill, the prince wrung the pigeon's neck, and that of course was the end of the dragon and his unscrupulous career.

TRUE STEEL

A certain warlock called True Steel carried off a prince's wife and kept her shut up in his cave. But the prince contrived to get speech of her and told her that she must persuade True Steel to reveal to her where his strength lay. So when True Steel came home, the prince's wife said to him, "Tell me, now, where is your great strength?" He answered, "My strength is in my sword." Then she began to pray and turned to his sword. When True Steel saw that, he laughed and said, "O foolish woman! my strength is not in my sword, but in my bow and arrows." Then she turned towards the bow and arrows and prayed. But True Steel said, "I see, you have a clever teacher who has taught you to find out where my strength lies. I could almost say that your husband is

STORIES

living, and it is he who teaches you." But she assured him that nobody had taught her. When she found he had deceived her again, she waited for some days and then asked him again about the secret of his strength. He answered, "Since you think so much of my strength, I will tell you truly where it is. Far away from here there is a very high mountain; in the mountain there is a fox; in the fox there is a heart; in the heart there is a bird, and in this bird is my strength. It is no easy task, however, to catch the fox, for she can transform herself into a multitude of creatures." So next day, when True Steel went forth from the cave, the prince came and learned from his wife the true secret of the warlock's strength. So away he hied to the mountain, and there, though the fox, or rather the vixen, turned herself into various shapes, he managed, with the help of certain friendly eagles, falcons, and dragons, to catch and kill her. Then he took out the fox's heart, and out of the heart he took the bird and burned it in a great fire. At that very moment True Steel fell down dead.

THE SOULLESS KING

A prince married a princess and got with her a kingdom to boot. She gave him the keys of the castle and told him he might enter every chamber except one small room, of which the key had a bit of twine tied to it. But one day, having nothing to do, he amused himself by rummaging in all

THE SOULLESS KING

the rooms of the castle, and amongst the rest he went into the little forbidden chamber. In it he found twelve heads and a man hanging on the hook of the door. The man said to the prince, "Oblige me by fetching me a glass of beer." The prince fetched it and the man drank it. Then the man said to the prince, "Oblige me by releasing me from the hook." The prince released him. Now the man was a king without a soul, and he at once availed himself of his liberty to come to an understanding with the coachman of the castle, and between them they put the prince's wife in the coach and drove off with her. The prince rode after them, and coming up with the coach called out, "Halt, Soulless King! Step out and fight!" The king stepped out and the fight began. In a trice the king had sliced the buttons off the prince's coat and pinked him in the side. Then he stepped into the coach and drove off. The prince rode after him again, and when he came up with the coach he called out, "Halt, Soulless King! Step out and fight!" The king stepped out and they fought again, and again the king sliced off the prince's buttons and pinked him in the side. Then, after carefully wiping and sheathing his sword, he said to his discomfited adversary, "Now look here. I let you off the first time for the sake of the glass of beer you gave me, and I let you off the second time because you let me down from that infernal hook; but if you fight me a third time, by Gad I'll make mince-meat of you." Then he stepped into the coach, told the coachman to drive on, jerked up the

STORIES

coach window with a bang, and drove away like anything. But the prince galloped after him, and coming up with the coach for the third time he called out, "Halt, Soulless King! Step out and fight!" The king did step out, and at it the two of them went, tooth and nail. But the prince had no chance. Before he knew where he was, the king ran him through the body, whisked off his head, and left him lying a heap of raw mince beside the road. His wife, or rather his widow, said to the king, "Let me gather up the fragments that remain." The king said, "Certainly." So she made up the mince into a neat parcel, deposited it on the front seat of the coach, and away they drove to the king's castle. Well, to cut a long story short, a brother-in-law of the deceased prince sent a hawk to fetch the water of life; the hawk brought it in his beak; the brother-in-law poured the water on the fragments of the prince, and the prince came to life again at once safe and sound. Then he went to the king's castle and played on a little pipe, and his wife heard it in the castle and said, "That is how my husband used to play, whom the king cut in bits." So she went out to the gate and said to him, "Are you my husband?" "That I am," said he, and he told her to find out from the king where he kept his soul and then to come and tell him. So she went to the king and asked him where his soul was. The king replied, "My soul is in yonder lake. In that lake lies a stone; in that stone is a hare; in the hare is a duck, in the duck is an egg, and in the egg is my soul." So the queen went and



*"The King stepped out
and the fight began"*
THE SOULLESS KING



THE SOULLESS KING

told her former husband, the prince, and gave him plenty of money and food for the journey, and off he set for the lake. But when he came to the lake, he did not know in which part of it the stone was; so he roamed about the banks, and he was hungry, for he had eaten up all the food. Then he met a dog, and the dog said to him, "Don't shoot me dead. I will be a mighty helper to you in your time of need." So he let the dog live and went on his way. Next he saw a tree with two hawks on it, an old one and a young one, and he climbed up the tree to catch the young one. But the old hawk said to him, "Don't take my young one. He will be a mighty helper to you in your time of need." So the prince climbed down the tree and went on his way. Then he saw a huge crab and wished to break off one of his claws for something to eat, but the crab said to him, "Don't break off my claw. It will be a mighty helper to you in your time of need." So he left the crab alone and went on his way. And he came to people and got them to fish up the stone for him from the lake and to bring it to him on the bank. And there he broke the stone in two and out of the stone jumped a hare. But the dog seized the hare and tore him, and out of the hare flew a duck. The young hawk pounced on the duck and rent it, and out of the duck fell an egg, and the egg rolled into the lake. But the crab fetched the egg out of the lake and brought it to the prince. Then the king fell ill. So the prince went to the king and said, "You killed me. Now I will kill you." "Don't," said the king.

STORIES

"I will," said the prince. With that he threw the egg on the ground, and the king fell out of the bed as dead as a stone. So the prince went home with his wife, and very happy they were, you may take my word for it.

THE GIANT WHOSE SOUL WAS IN A DUCK'S EGG

A giant carried off a king's wife and his two horses and kept them in his den. But the horses attacked the giant and mauled him so that he could hardly crawl. He said to the queen, "If I myself had my soul to keep, those horses would have killed me long ago." "And where, my dear," said she, "is thy soul? By the books I will take care of it." "It is in the Bonnach stone," said he. So on the morrow when the giant went out, the queen set the Bonnach stone in order exceedingly. In the dusk of the evening the giant came back, and he said to the queen, "What made thee set the Bonnach stone in order like that?" "Because thy soul is in it," quoth she. "I perceive," said he, "that if thou didst know where my soul is, thou wouldst give it much respect." "That I would," said she. "It is not there," said he, "my soul is; it is in the threshold." On the morrow she set the threshold in order finely, and when the giant returned he asked her, "What brought thee to set the threshold in order like that?" "Because thy soul is in it," said she. "I perceive," said he, "that if thou

HEADLESS HUGH

knewest where my soul is, thou wouldst take care of it." "That I would," said she. "It is not there that my soul is," said he. "There is a great flagstone under the threshold. There is a wether under the flag. There is a duck in the wether's belly, and an egg in the belly of the duck, and it is in the egg that my soul is." On the morrow when the giant was gone, they raised the flagstone and out came the wether. They opened the wether and out came the duck. They split the duck and out came the egg. And the queen took the egg and crushed it in her hands, and at that very moment the giant, who was coming home in the dusk, fell down dead.

HEADLESS HUGH

Another Highland story sets forth how Hugh, prince of Lochlin, was long held captive by a giant who lived in a cave overlooking the Sound of Mull. At last, after he had spent many years of captivity in that dismal cave, it came to pass that one night the giant and his wife had a great dispute, and Hugh overheard their talk, and learned that the giant's soul was in a precious gem which he always wore on his forehead. So the prince watched his opportunity, seized the gem, and having no means of escape or concealment, hastily swallowed it. Like lightning from the clouds, the giant's sword flashed from its scabbard and flew between Hugh's head and his body to intercept the gem before it could

STORIES

descend into the prince's stomach. But it was too late; and the giant fell down, sword in hand, and expired without a gasp. Hugh had now lost his head, it is true, but having the giant's soul in his body he felt none the worse for the accident. So he buckled the giant's sword at his side, mounted the grey filly, swifter than the east wind, that never had a bridle, and rode home. But the want of his head made a painful impression on his friends; indeed, they maintained that he was a ghost and shut the door in his face, so now he wanders for ever in shades of darkness, riding the grey filly fleetier than the wind. On stormy nights, when the wind howls about the gables and among the trees, you may see him galloping along the shore of the sea "between wave and sand." Many a naughty little boy, who would not go quietly to bed, has been carried off by Headless Hugh on his grey filly and never seen again.

THE HELPFUL ANIMALS

A big giant, king of Sorchu, stole away the wife and the shaggy dun filly of the herdsman or king of Cruachan. So the herdsman baked a bannock to take with him by the way, and set off in quest of his wife and the filly. He went for a long, long time, till at last his soles were blackened and his cheeks were sunken, the yellow-headed birds were going to rest at the roots of the bushes and the tops of the thickets, and the dark clouds

THE HELPFUL ANIMALS

of night were coming and the clouds of day were departing; and he saw a house far from him, but though it was far from him he did not take long to reach it. He went in, and sat in the upper end of the house, but there was no one within; and the fire was newly kindled, the house newly swept, and the bed newly made; and who came in but the hawk of Glencuaich, and she said to him, "Are you here, young son of Cruachan?" "I am," said he. The hawk said to him, "Do you know who was here last night?" "I do not," said he. "There were here," said she, "the big giant, king of Sorcha, your wife, and the shaggy dun filly; and the giant was threatening terribly that if he could get hold of you he would take the head off you." "I well believe it," said he. Then she gave him food and drink, and sent him to bed. She rose in the morning, made breakfast for him, and baked a bannock for him to take with him on his journey. And he went away and travelled all day, and in the evening he came to another house and went in, and was entertained by the green-headed duck, who told him that the giant had rested there the night before with the wife and shaggy dun filly of the herdsman of Cruachan. And next day the herdsman journeyed again, and at evening he came to another house and went in and was entertained by the fox of the scrub-wood, who told him just what the hawk of Glencuaich and the green-headed duck had told him before. Next day the same thing happened, only it was the brown otter of the burn that entertained him at evening in a house where the fire was newly

STORIES

kindled, the floor newly swept, and the bed newly made. And next morning when he awoke, the first thing he saw was the hawk of Glencuaich, the green-headed duck, the fox of the scrubwood, and the brown otter of the burn all dancing together on the floor. They made breakfast for him, and partook of it all together, and said to him, "Should you be at any time in straits, think of us, and we will help you." Well, that very evening he came to the cave where the giant lived, and who was there before him but his own wife? She gave him food and hid him under clothes at the upper end of the cave. And when the giant came home he sniffed about and said, "The smell of a stranger is in the cave." But she said no, it was only a little bird she had roasted. "And I wish you would tell me," said she, "where you keep your life, that I might take good care of it." "It is in a grey stone over there," said he. So next day when he went away she took the grey stone and dressed it well, and placed it in the upper end of the cave. When the giant came home in the evening he said to her, "What is it that you have dressed there?" "Your own life," said she, "and we must be careful of it." "I perceive that you are very fond of me, but it is not there," said he. "Where is it?" said she. "It is in a grey sheep on yonder hillside," said he. On the morrow, when he went away, she got the grey sheep, dressed it well, and placed it in the upper end of the cave. When he came home in the evening he said, "What is it that you have dressed there?" "Your own life, my love," said she. "It



*All dancing together
on the floor . . .*
THE HELPFUL ANIMALS

THE HELPFUL ANIMALS

is not there as yet," said he. "Well!" said she, "you are putting me to great trouble taking care of it, and you have not told me the truth these two times." He then said, "I think that I may tell it to you now. My life is below the feet of the big horse in the stable. There is a place down there in which there is a small lake. Over the lake are seven grey hides, and over the hides are seven sods from the heath, and under all these are seven oak planks. There is a trout in the lake, and a duck in the belly of the trout, an egg in the belly of the duck, and a thorn of blackthorn inside of the egg, and till that thorn is chewed small I cannot be killed. Whenever the seven grey hides, the seven sods from the heath, and the seven oak planks are touched I shall feel it wherever I shall be. I have an axe above the door, and unless all these are cut through with one blow of it the lake will not be reached; and when it will be reached I shall feel it." Next day, when the giant had gone out hunting on the hill, the herdsman of Cruachan contrived, with the help of the friendly animals—the hawk, the duck, the fox, and the otter—to get possession of the fateful thorn and to chew it before the giant could reach him; and no sooner had he done so than the giant dropped stark and stiff, a corpse.

STORIES

THE JINNEE AND THE SPARROW

In the *Arabian Nights* we read how Seyf el-Mulook, after wandering for four months over mountains and hills and deserts, came to a lofty place in which he found the lovely daughter of the king of India sitting alone on a golden couch in a hall spread with silken carpets. She tells him that she is held captive by a jinnee, who had swooped down on her and carried her off while she was disporting herself with her female slaves in a tank in the great garden of her father the king. Seyf el-Mulook then offers to smite the jinnee with the sword and slay him. "But," she replied, "thou canst not slay him unless thou kill his soul." "And in what place," said he, "is his soul?" She answered, "I asked him respecting it many times; but he would not confess to me its place. It happened, however, that I urged him one day, and he was enraged against me, and said to me, 'How often wilt thou ask me respecting my soul? What is the reason of thy question respecting my soul?' So I answered him, 'O Hátim, there remaineth to me no one but thee, excepting God; and I, as long as I live, would not cease to hold thy soul in my embrace; and if I do not take care of thy soul, and put it in the midst of my eye, how can I live after thee? If I knew thy soul, I would take care of it as of my right eye.' And thereupon he said to me, 'When I was born, the astrologers declared that the destruction of my soul would be

THE HEART IN THE ACACIA

effected by the hand of one of the sons of the human kings. I therefore took my soul, and put it into the crop of a sparrow, and I imprisoned the sparrow in a little box, and put this into another small box, and this I put within seven other small boxes, and I put these within seven chests, and the chests I put into a coffer of marble within the verge of this circumambient ocean; for this part is remote from the countries of mankind, and none of mankind can gain access to it.' ” But Seyf el-Mulook got possession of the sparrow and strangled it, and the jinnee fell upon the ground a heap of black ashes.

THE HEART IN THE FLOWER OF THE ACACIA

Once upon a time in Egypt there were two brethren; the name of the elder was Anpu and the name of the younger was Bata. Now Anpu had a house and a wife, and his younger brother dwelt with him as his servant. It was Anpu who made the garments, and every morning when it grew light he drove the kine afield. As he walked behind them the beasts used to say to him, “The grass is good in such and such a place,” and he heard what they said and led them to the good pasture that they desired. So his kine grew very sleek and multiplied greatly. One day when the two brothers were at work in the field the elder brother said to the younger, “Run and fetch seed

STORIES

from the village." So the younger brother ran and said to the wife of his elder brother, "Give me seed that I may run to the field, for my brother sent me saying, 'Tarry not.'" She said, "Go to the barn and take as much as thou wouldst." He went and filled a jar full of wheat and barley, and came forth bearing it on his shoulders. When the woman saw him she said to him, "Come, let us chatter a while together." But he replied, "My brother is to me as a father, and he said, 'Tarry not.'" So he would not hearken to her, but took the load on his back and went away to the field. The woman was angered; she was revengeful, and a liar to boot. So when in the evening the elder brother was returning from the field, the woman took soot and made herself as one who had been beaten. And when her husband came home she said, "When thy younger brother came to fetch seed he said to me, 'Come, let us chatter a while together.' But I would not, and he beat me." Then the elder brother became like a panther of the south; he sharpened his knife and stood behind the door of the cow-house. And when the sun set and the younger brother came laden with all the herbs of the field, as was his wont every day, the cow that walked in front of the herd said to him, "Behold, thine elder brother stands with a knife to kill thee. Flee before him." When he heard what the cow said, he looked under the door of the cow-house and saw the feet of his elder brother standing behind the door, his knife in his hand. So he fled, and his brother pursued him with the knife. Bu

THE HEART IN THE ACACIA

the younger brother cried for help to the Sun, and the Sun heard him and caused a great water to spring up between him and his elder brother, and the water was full of crocodiles. The two brothers stood, the one on the one side of the water and the other on the other, and the younger brother told the elder brother all that had befallen. So the elder brother repented him of what he had done, and he lifted up his voice and wept. But he could not come at the farther bank by reason of the crocodiles. His younger brother called to him and said, "Go home and tend the cattle thyself. For I will dwell no more in the place where thou art. I will go to the Valley of the Acacia. But this is what thou shalt do for me. Thou shalt come and care for me if evil befalls me, for I will enchant my heart and place it on the top of the flower of the Acacia; and if they cut the Acacia and my heart falls to the ground, thou shalt come and seek it, and when thou hast found it thou shalt lay it in a vessel of fresh water. Then I shall come to life again. But this is the sign that evil has befallen me: the pot of beer in thine hand shall bubble." So he went away to the Valley of the Acacia, but his brother returned home with dust on his head and slew his wife and cast her to the dogs.

For many days afterwards the younger brother dwelt alone in the Valley of the Acacia. By day he hunted the beasts of the field, but at evening he came and laid him down under the Acacia, on the top of whose flower was his heart. And many days after that he built himself a house in the Valley

STORIES

of the Acacia. But the gods were grieved for him, and made him a wife to dwell with him, who was perfect in her limbs more than any woman on earth, for all the gods were in her. But one day a lock of her hair fell into the river and floated down to the land of Egypt, to the house of Pharaoh's washerwomen. The fragrance of the lock perfumed Pharaoh's raiment, and the washerwomen were blamed, for it was said, "An odour of perfume in the garments of Pharaoh!" So the heart of Pharaoh's chief washerman was weary of the complaints that were made every day, and he went to the wharf, and there in the water he spied the lock of hair. He sent one down into the river to fetch it, and, because it smelt sweetly, he took it to Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh's magicians were sent for and they said, "This lock of hair belongs to a daughter of the Sun, who has in her the essence of all the gods. Let messengers go forth to all foreign lands to seek her." So the woman was brought from the Valley of the Acacia with chariots and archers and much people, and all the land of Egypt rejoiced at her coming, and Pharaoh loved her. But when they asked her of her husband, she said to Pharaoh, "Let them cut down the Acacia and let them destroy it." So men were sent with tools to cut down the Acacia. They came to it and cut the flower upon which was the heart of Bata; and he fell down dead in that evil hour. But the next day, when the earth grew light and the elder brother of Bata was entered into his house and had sat down, they brought him a pot of beer and it

THE WICKED FAIRY

bubbled, and they gave him a jug of wine and it grew turbid. Then he took his staff and his sandals and hied him to the Valley of the Acacia, and there he found his younger brother lying dead in his house. So he sought for the heart of his brother under the Acacia. For three years he sought in vain, but in the fourth year he found it in the berry of the Acacia. So he threw the heart into a cup of fresh water. And when it was night and the heart had sucked in much water, Bata shook in all his limbs and revived. Then he drank the cup of water in which his heart was, and his heart went into its place, and he lived as before.

THE WICKED FAIRY

An Italian tale sets forth how a great cloud, which was really a fairy, used to receive a young girl as tribute every year from a certain city; and the inhabitants had to give the girls up, for if they did not the cloud would throw things at them and kill them all. One year it fell to the lot of the king's daughter to be handed over to the cloud, and they took her in procession, to the roll of muffled drums, and attended by her weeping father and mother, to the top of a mountain, and left her sitting in a chair there all alone. Then the fairy cloud came down on the top of the mountain, set the princess in her lap, and began to suck her blood out of her little finger; for it was on the blood of girls that this wicked fairy lived. When the poor

STORIES

princess was faint with the loss of blood and lay like a log, the cloud carried her away up to her fairy palace in the sky. But a brave youth had seen all that happened from behind a bush, and no sooner did the fairy spirit away the princess to her palace than he turned himself into an eagle and flew after them. He lighted on a tree just outside the palace, and looking in at the window he beheld a room full of young girls all in bed; for these were the victims of former years whom the fairy cloud had half killed by sucking their blood; yet they called her mamma. When the fairy went away and left the girls, the brave young man had food drawn up for them by ropes, and he told them to ask the fairy how she might be killed and what was to become of them when she died. It was a delicate question, but the fairy answered it, saying, "I shall never die." However, when the girls pressed her, she took them out on a terrace and said, "Do you see that mountain far off there? On that mountain is a tigress with seven heads. If you wish me to die, a lion must fight that tigress and tear off all seven of her heads. In her body is an egg, and if any one hits me with it in the middle of my forehead I shall die; but if that egg falls into my hands the tigress will come to life again, resume her seven heads, and I shall live." When the young girls heard this they pretended to be glad and said, "Good! certainly our mamma can never die," but naturally they were discouraged. However, when she went away again, they told it all to the young man, and he bade them have no fear. Away he



The cloud carried her away
THE WICKED FAIRY

THE TREE-ELF

went to the mountain, turned himself into a lion, and fought the tigress. Meantime the fairy came home, saying, "Alas! I feel ill!" For six days the fight went on, the young man tearing off one of the tigress's heads each day, and each day the strength of the fairy kept ebbing away. Then after allowing himself two days' rest the hero tore off the seventh head and secured the egg, but not till it had rolled into the sea and been brought back to him by a friendly dog-fish. When he returned to the fairy with the egg in his hand, she begged and prayed him to give it her, but he made her first restore the young girls to health and send them away in handsome carriages. When she had done so, he struck her on the forehead with the egg, and she fell down dead.

THE TREE-ELF

Once upon a time, so runs the tale, a young peasant was busy raking the hay in a meadow, when on the rim of the horizon a heavy thunder-cloud loomed black and angry, warning him to make haste with his work before the storm should break. He finished in time, and was wending his way homeward, when under a tree he espied a stranger fast asleep. "He will be drenched to the skin," thought the good-natured young fellow to himself, "if I allow him to sleep on." So he stepped up to the sleeper and, shaking him forcibly, roused him from his slumber. The stranger started up, and at

STORIES

sight of the thunder-cloud, which now darkened the sky, he blanched, fumbled in his pockets, and, finding nothing in them wherewith to reward the friendly swain, he said, "This time I am your debtor. But the time will come when I shall be able to repay your kindness. Remember what I tell you. You will enlist. You will be parted from your friends for years, and one day a feeling of homesickness will come over you in a foreign land. Then look up, and you will see a crooked birch-tree a few steps from you. Go to it, knock thrice on the trunk, and ask, 'Is the Crooked One at home?' The rest will follow." With these words the stranger hastened away and was out of sight in a moment. The peasant also went his way, and soon forgot all about the matter. Well, time went by and part of the stranger's prophecy came true. For the peasant turned soldier and served in a cavalry regiment for years. One day, when he was quartered with his regiment in the north of Finland, it fell to his turn to tend the horses while his comrades were roistering in the tavern. Suddenly a great yearning for home, such as he had never known before, came over the lonely trooper; tears started to his eyes, and dear visions of his native land crowded on his soul. Then he bethought him of the sleeping stranger in the wood, and the whole scene came back to him as fresh as if it had happened yesterday. He looked up, and there, strange to tell, he was aware of a crooked birch-tree right in front of him. More in jest than in earnest he went up to it and did as the stranger had bidden him.

THE TREE-ELF

Hardly had the words, "Is the Crooked One at home?" passed his lips when the stranger himself stood before him and said, "I am glad you have come. I feared you had forgotten me. You wish to be at home, do you not?" The trooper said yes, he did. Then the Crooked One cried into the tree, "Young folks, which of you is the fleetest?" A voice from the birch replied, "Father, I can run as fast as a moor-hen flies." "Well, I need a fleeter messenger to-day." A second voice answered, "I can run like the wind." "I need a swifter envoy," said the father. Then a third voice cried, "I can run like the thought of man." "You are after my own heart. Fill a bag full of gold and take it with my friend and benefactor to his home." Then he caught the soldier by the hat, crying, "The hat to the man, and the man to the house!" The same moment the soldier felt his hat fly from his head. When he looked about for it, lo! he was at home in the old familiar parlour wearing his old peasant clothes, and the great sack of money stood beside him. Yet on parade and at the roll-call he was never missed. When the man who told this story was asked, "Who could the stranger be?" he answered, "Who but a tree-elf?"

STORIES

THE PRINCESS WHO MIGHT NOT SEE THE SUN

In a Danish story we read of a princess who was fated to be carried off by a warlock if ever the sun shone on her before she had passed her thirtieth year; so the king her father kept her shut up in the palace, and had all the windows on the east, south, and west sides blocked up, lest a sunbeam should fall on his darling child, and he should thus lose her for ever. Only at evening, when the sun was down, might she walk for a little in the beautiful garden of the castle. In time a prince came a-wooing, followed by a train of gorgeous knights and squires on horses all ablaze with gold and silver. The king said the prince might have his daughter to wife on condition that he would not carry her away to his home till she was thirty years old, but would live with her in the castle where the windows looked out only to the north. The prince agreed, so married they were. The bride was only fifteen, and fifteen more long weary years must pass before she might step out of the gloomy donjon, breathe the fresh air, and see the sun. But she and her gallant young bridegroom loved each other and they were happy. Often they sat hand in hand at the window looking out to the north and talked of what they would do when they were free. Still it was a little dull to look out always at the same window and to see nothing but the castle woods, and the distant hills, and the clouds drifting silently

THE SUNLESS PRINCESS

over them. Well, one day it happened that all the people in the castle had gone away to a neighbouring castle to witness a tournament and other gaities, and the two young folks were left as usual all alone at the window looking out to the north. They sat silent for a time gazing away to the hills. It was a grey sad day, the sky was overcast, and the weather seemed to draw to rain. At last the prince said, "There will be no sunshine to-day. What if we were to drive over and join the rest at the tournament?" His young wife gladly consented, for she longed to see more of the world than those eternal green woods and those eternal blue hills, which were all she saw from the window. So the horses were put into the coach, and it rattled up to the door, and in they got and away they drove. At first all went well. The clouds hung low over the woods, the wind sighed in the trees; a drearier day you could hardly imagine. So they joined the rest at the other castle and took their seats to watch the jousting in the lists. So intent were they in watching the gay spectacle of the prancing steeds, the fluttering pennons, and the glittering armour of the knights, that they failed to mark the change, the fatal change, in the weather. For the wind was rising and had begun to disperse the clouds, and suddenly the sun broke through, and the glory of it fell like an aureole on the young wife, and at once she vanished away. No sooner did her husband miss her from his side than he, too, mysteriously disappeared. The tournament broke up in confusion, the bereft father hastened home, and shut himself up in the

STORIES

dark castle from which the light of life had departed. The green woods and the blue hills could still be seen from the window that looked to the north, but the young faces that had gazed out of it so wistfully were gone, as it seemed, for ever.

PART VI
LANDSCAPES

THE WOODS OF LATIUM

THEOPHRASTUS has left us a description of the woods of Latium as they were in the fourth century before Christ. He says: "The land of the Latins is all moist. The plains produce laurels, myrtles, and wonderful beeches; for they fell trees of such a size that a single stem suffices for the keel of a Tyrrhenian ship. Pines and firs grow in the mountains. What they call the land of Circe is a lofty headland thickly wooded with oak, myrtle, and luxuriant laurels. The natives say that Circe dwelt there, and they shew the grave of Elpenor, from which grow myrtles such as wreaths are made of, whereas the other myrtle-trees are tall." Thus the prospect from the top of the Alban Mount in the early days of Rome must have been very different in some respects from what it is to-day. The purple Apennines, indeed, in their eternal calm on the one hand, and the shining Mediterranean in its eternal unrest on the other, no doubt looked then much as they look now, whether bathed in sunshine or chequered by the fleeting shadows of clouds; but instead of the desolate brown expanse of the fever-stricken Campagna, spanned by its long



LANDSCAPES

lines of ruined aqueducts, like the broken arches of the bridge in the vision of Mirza, the eye must have ranged over woodlands that stretched away, mile after mile, on all sides, till their varied hues of green or autumnal scarlet and gold melted insensibly into the blue of the distant mountains and sea.

A HARVEST-HOME IN COS

Theocritus has painted for us in glowing colours a picture of a rustic harvest-home, as it fell on a bright autumn day some two thousand years ago in the little Greek island of Cos. The poet tells us how he went with two friends from the city to attend a festival given by farmers, who were offering first-fruits to Demeter from the store of barley with which she had filled their barns. The day was warm, indeed so hot that the very lizards, which love to bask and run about in the sun, were slumbering in the crevices of the stone walls, and not a lark soared carolling into the blue vault of heaven. Yet despite the great heat there were everywhere signs of autumn. "All things," says the poet, "smelt of summer, but smelt of autumn too." Indeed the day was really autumnal; for a goat-herd who met the friends on their way to the rural merry-making asked them whether they were bound for the treading of the grapes in the wine-presses. And when they had reached their destination and reclined at ease in the dappled shade of over-arching poplars and elms, with the babble of a neighbouring fountain,

THE VALE OF THE ADONIS

the buzz of the cicalas, the hum of bees, and the cooing of doves in their ears, the ripe apples and pears rolled in the grass at their feet, and the branches of the wild-plum trees were bowed down to the earth with the weight of their purple fruit. So couched on soft beds of fragrant lentisk they passed the sultry hours singing ditties alternately, while a rustic image of Demeter, to whom the honours of the day were paid, stood smiling beside a heap of yellow grain on the threshing-floor, with corn-stalks and poppies in her hands.

THE VALE OF THE ADONIS

At Aphaca there was a famous grove and sanctuary of Astarte. The site of the temple has been discovered by modern travellers near the miserable village which still bears the name of Afka at the head of the wild, romantic, wooded gorge of the Adonis. The hamlet stands among groves of noble walnut-trees on the brink of the lynn. A little way off the river rushes from a cavern at the foot of a mighty amphitheatre of towering cliffs to plunge in a series of cascades into the awful depths of the glen. The deeper it descends, the ranker and denser grows the vegetation, which, sprouting from the crannies and fissures of the rocks, spreads a green veil over the roaring or murmuring stream in the tremendous chasm below. There is something delicious, almost intoxicating, in the freshness of these tumbling waters, in the sweetness and

LANDSCAPES

purity of the mountain air, in the vivid green of the vegetation. The temple, of which some massive hewn blocks and a fine column of Syenite granite still mark the site, occupied a terrace facing the source of the river and commanding a magnificent prospect. Across the foam and the roar of the waterfalls you look up to the cavern and away to the top of the sublime precipices above. So lofty is the cliff that the goats which creep along its ledges to browse on the bushes appear like ants to the spectator hundreds of feet below. Seaward the view is especially impressive when the sun floods the profound gorge with golden light, revealing all the fantastic buttresses and rounded towers of its mountain rampart, and falling softly on the varied green of the woods which clothe its depths. It was here that, according to the legend, Adonis met Aphrodite for the first or the last time, and here his mangled body was buried. A fairer scene could hardly be imagined for a story of tragic love and death. Yet, sequestered as the valley is and must always have been, it is not wholly deserted. A convent or a village may be observed here and there standing out against the sky on the top of some beetling crag, or clinging to the face of a nearly perpendicular cliff high above the foam and the din of the river; and at evening the lights that twinkle through the gloom betray the presence of human habitations on slopes which might seem inaccessible to man. In antiquity the whole of the lovely vale appears to have been dedicated to Adonis, and to this day it is haunted by his memory;

THE HOME OF THE CILICIAN PIRATES

for the heights which shut it in are crested at various points by ruined monuments of his worship, some of them overhanging dreadful abysses, down which it turns the head dizzy to look and see the eagles wheeling about their nests far below. One such monument exists at Ghineh. The face of a great rock, above a roughly hewn recess, is here carved with figures of Adonis and Aphrodite. He is portrayed with spear in rest, awaiting the attack of a bear, while she is seated in an attitude of sorrow. Her grief-stricken figure may well be the mourning Aphrodite of the Lebanon described by Macrobius, and the recess in the rock is perhaps her lover's tomb. Every year, in the belief of his worshippers, Adonis was wounded to death on the mountains, and every year the face of nature itself was dyed with his sacred blood. So year by year the Syrian damsels lamented his untimely fate, while the red anemone, his flower, bloomed among the cedars of Lebanon, and the river ran red to the sea, fringing the winding shores of the blue Mediterranean, whenever the wind set inshore, with a sinuous band of crimson.

THE HOME OF THE CILICIAN PIRATES

The ancient inhabitants of the Cilician uplands earned their bread by less reputable means than the toil of the husbandman and the vinedresser. They were buccaneers and slavers, scouring the high seas with their galleys and retiring with their

LANDSCAPES

booty to the inaccessible fastnesses of their mountains. In the decline of Greek power all over the East the pirate communities of Cilicia grew into a formidable state, recruited by gangs of desperadoes and broken men who flocked to it from all sides. The holds of these robbers may still be seen perched on the brink of the profound ravines which cleave the tableland at frequent intervals. With their walls of massive masonry, their towers and battlements, overhanging dizzy depths, they are admirably adapted to bid defiance to the pursuit of justice. In antiquity the dark forests of cedar, which clothed much of the country and supplied the pirates with timber for their ships, must have rendered access to these fastnesses still more difficult. The great gorge of the Lamas River, which eats its way like a sheet of forked lightning into the heart of the mountains, is dotted every few miles with fortified towns, some of them still magnificent in their ruins, dominating sheer cliffs high above the stream. They are now the haunt only of the ibex and the bear. Each of these communities had its own crest or badge, which may still be seen carved on the corners of the mouldering towers. No doubt, too, it blazoned the same crest on the hull, the sails, or the streamers of the galley which, manned with a crew of ruffians, it sent out to prey upon the rich merchantmen in the Golden Sea, as the corsairs called the highway of commerce between Crete and Africa.

A staircase cut in the rock connects one of these ruined castles with the river in the glen, a thousand

THE CORYCIAN CAVE

feet below. But the steps are worn and dangerous, indeed impassable. You may go for miles along the edge of these stupendous cliffs before you find a way down. The paths keep on the heights, for in many of its reaches the gully affords no foothold even to the agile nomads who alone roam these solitudes. At evening the winding course of the river may be traced for a long distance by a mist which, as the heat of the day declines, rises like steam from the deep gorge, and hangs suspended in a wavy line of fleecy cloud above it. But even more imposing than the ravine of the Lamas is the terrific gorge known as the *Sheitan dere* or Devil's Glen near the Corycian cave. Prodigious walls of rock, glowing in the intense sunlight, black in the shadow, and spanned by a summer sky of the deepest blue, hem in the dry bed of a winter torrent, choked with rocks and tangled with thickets of evergreens, among which the oleanders, with their slim stalks, delicate taper leaves, and bunches of crimson blossom, stand out conspicuous.

THE CORYCIAN CAVE

Following the shore westward from Corycus for about an hour you come to a pretty cove enclosed by wooded heights, where a spring of pure cold water bubbles up close to the sea, giving to the spot its name of *Tatlu-su*, or the Sweet Water. From this bay a steep ascent of about a mile along an ancient paved road leads inland to a plateau. Here,

LANDSCAPES

threading your way through a labyrinth or petrified sea of jagged calcareous rocks, you suddenly find yourself on the brink of a vast chasm which yawns at your feet. This is the Corycian cave. In reality it is not a cave but an immense hollow or trough in the plateau, of oval shape, and perhaps half a mile in circumference. The cliffs which enclose it vary from one hundred to over two hundred feet in depth. Its uneven bottom slopes throughout its whole length from north to south, and is covered by a thick jungle of trees and shrubs—myrtles, pomegranates, carobs, and many more, kept always fresh and green by rivulets, underground water, and the shadow of the great cliffs. A single narrow path leads down into its depths. The way is long and rough, but the deeper you descend the denser grows the vegetation, and it is under the dappled shade of whispering leaves and with the purling of brooks in your ears that you at last reach the bottom. The saffron which of old grew here among the bushes is no longer to be found, though it still flourishes in the surrounding district. This luxuriant bottom, with its rich verdure, its refreshing moisture, its grateful shade, is called Paradise by the wandering herdsmen. They tether their camels and pasture their goats in it and come hither in the late summer to gather the ripe pomegranates. At the southern and deepest end of this great cliff-encircled hollow you come to the cavern proper. The ruins of a Byzantine church, which replaced a heathen temple, partly block the entrance. Inwards the cave

THE BATHS OF SOLOMON

descends with a gentle slope into the bowels of the earth. The old path paved with polygonal masonry still runs through it, but soon disappears under sand. At about two hundred feet from its mouth the cave comes to an end, and a tremendous roar of subterranean water is heard. By crawling on all fours you may reach a small pool arched by a dripping stalactite-hung roof, but the stream which makes the deafening din is invisible. It was otherwise in antiquity. A river of clear water burst from the rock, but only to vanish again into a chasm. Such changes in the course of streams are common in countries subject to earthquakes and to the disruption caused by volcanic agency. The ancients believed that this mysterious cavern was haunted ground. In the rumble and roar of the waters they seemed to hear the clash of cymbals touched by hands divine.

THE BATHS OF SOLOMON

The famous hot springs in the land of Moab flow through a wild gorge into the Dead Sea. In antiquity the springs went by the Greek name of Callirrhoe, the Fair-flowing. It was to them that the dying Herod, weighed down by a complication of disorders, which the pious Jews traced to God's vengeance, repaired in the vain hope of arresting or mitigating the fatal progress of disease. The healing waters brought no alleviation of his sufferings, and he retired to Jericho to die. The hot

LANDSCAPES

springs burst in various places from the sides of a deep romantic ravine to form a large and rapid stream of lukewarm water, which rushes down the depths of the lynn, dashing and foaming over boulders, under the dense shade of tamarisk-trees and cane-brakes, the rocks on either bank draped with an emerald fringe of maidenhair fern. One of the springs falls from a high rocky shelf over the face of a cliff which is tinted bright yellow by the sulphurous water. The lofty crags which shut in the narrow chasm are bold and imposing in outline and varied in colour, for they range from red sandstone through white and yellow limestone to black basalt. The waters issue from the line where the sandstone and limestone meet. Their temperature is high, and from great clefts in the mountain-sides you may see clouds of steam rising and hear the rumbling of the running waters. The bottom of the glen is clothed and half choked with rank vegetation; for, situated far below the level of the sea, the hot ravine is almost African in climate and flora. Here grow dense thickets of canes with their feathery tufts that shake and nod in every passing breath of wind: here the oleander flourishes with its dark-green glossy foliage and its beautiful pink blossoms: here tall date-palms rear their stately heads wherever the hot springs flow. Gorgeous flowers, too, carpet the ground. Splendid orchids, some pinkish purple, some bright yellow, grow in large tufts, each flower-stalk more than three feet high, and covered with blossoms from the ground upwards. An exquisite rose-coloured

THE BATHS OF SOLOMON

geranium abounds among the stones; and where the soil is a little richer than usual it is a mass of the night-scented stock, while the crannies of the rocks are gay with scarlet ranunculus and masses of sorrel and cyclamen. Over all this luxuriant vegetation flit great butterflies of brilliant hues. Looking down the far-stretching gorge to its mouth you see in the distance the purple hills of Judah framed between walls of black basaltic columns on the one side and of bright red sandstone on the other.

Every year in the months of April and May the Arabs resort in crowds to the glen to benefit by the waters. They take up their quarters in huts made of the reeds which they cut in the thickets. They bathe in the steaming water, or allow it to splash on their bodies as it gushes in a powerful jet from a crevice in the rocks. But before they indulge in these ablutions, the visitors, both Moslem and Christian, propitiate the spirit or genius of the place by sacrificing a sheep or goat at the spring and allowing its red blood to tinge the water. Then they bathe in what they call the Baths of Solomon. Legend runs that Solomon the Wise made his bathing-place here, and in order to keep the water always warm he commanded the jinn never to let the fire die down. The jinn obey his orders to this day, but sometimes they slacken their efforts, and then the water runs low and cool. When the bathers perceive that, they say, "O Solomon, bring green wood, dry wood," and no sooner have they said so than the water begins to gurgle and steam as before. Sick people tell the saint or sheikh, who

LANDSCAPES

lives invisible in the springs, all about their ailments; they point out to him the precise spot that is the seat of the malady, it may be the back, or the head, or the legs; and if the heat of the water diminishes, they call out, "Thy bath is cold, O sheikh, thy bath is cold!" whereupon the obliging sheikh stokes up the fire, and out comes the water boiling. But if in spite of their remonstrances the temperature of the spring continues low, they say that the sheikh has gone on pilgrimage, and they shout to him to hasten his return.

THE PETRIFIED CASCADES OF HIERAPOLIS

The mysterious chasm of Hierapolis, with its deadly mist, has not been discovered in modern times; indeed it would seem to have vanished even in antiquity. It may have been destroyed by an earthquake. But another marvel of the Sacred City remains to this day. The hot springs with their calcareous deposit, which, like a wizard's wand, turns all that it touches to stone, excited the wonder of the ancients, and the course of ages has only enhanced the fantastic splendour of the great transformation scene. The stately ruins of Hierapolis occupy a broad shelf or terrace on the mountain-side commanding distant views of extraordinary beauty and grandeur, from the dark precipices and dazzling snows of Mount Cadmus away to the burnt summits of Phrygia, fading in rosy tints into

PETRIFIED CASCADES OF HIERAPOLIS

the blue of the sky. Hills, broken by wooded ravines, rise behind the city. In front the terrace falls away in cliffs three hundred feet high into the desolate treeless valley of the Lycus. Over the face of these cliffs the hot streams have poured or trickled for thousands of years, encrusting them with a pearly white substance like salt or driven snow. The appearance of the whole is as if a mighty river, some two miles broad, had been suddenly arrested in the act of falling over a great cliff and transformed into white marble. It is a petrified Niagara. The illusion is strongest in winter or in cool summer mornings when the mist from the hot springs hangs in the air, like a veil of spray resting on the foam of the waterfall. A closer inspection of the white cliff, which attracts the traveller's attention at a distance of twenty miles, only adds to its beauty and changes one illusion for another. For now it seems to be a glacier, its long pendent stalactites looking like icicles, and the snowy whiteness of its smooth expanse being tinged here and there with delicate hues of blue, rose, and green, all the colours of the rainbow. These petrified cascades of Hierapolis are among the wonders of the world. Indeed they have probably been without a rival in their kind ever since the famous white and pink terraces or staircases of Rotomahana in New Zealand were destroyed by a volcanic eruption.

The hot springs which have wrought these miracles at Hierapolis rise in a large deep pool among the vast and imposing ruins of the ancient

LANDSCAPES

city. The water is of a greenish-blue tint, but clear and transparent. At the bottom may be seen the white marble columns of a beautiful Corinthian colonnade, which must formerly have encircled the sacred pool. Shimmering through the green-blue water they look like the ruins of a Naiad's palace. Clumps of oleanders and pomegranate-trees overhang the little lake and add to its charm. Yet the enchanted spot has its dangers. Bubbles of carbonic acid gas rise incessantly from the bottom and mount like flickering particles of silver to the surface. Birds and beasts which come to drink of the water are sometimes found dead on the bank, stifled by the noxious vapour; and the villagers tell of bathers who have been overpowered by it and drowned, or dragged down, as they say, to death by the water-spirit.

APPENDIX

LIST OF EXTRACTS FROM THE 12-VOLUME EDITION OF "THE GOLDEN BOUGH"

Title.	Book.	Pages.
PART I		
CHRISTMAS AND THE MISTLETOE		
The Golden Bough	Balder, II.	286-294
The Mistletoe as Lightning-conductor, as Master-key, as Protection against Sorcery	" "	84-86
The Hays of Errol	" "	283-284
The Cattle's Conversation on Christmas Eve	Balder, I.	254
The Yule Log in Servia	" "	258-262
PART II		
UNCANNY BEINGS		
The Omnipresence of Demons	The Scapegoat	72-73
The Demons of Abbot Richalm	" "	105-106
The Witches' Sabbath	Balder, II.	73-74
The Werc-Wolves	Balder, I.	308-314
The External Soul	Balder, II.	206-208
The <i>Ustrels</i>	Balder, I.	284-286
Trees tenanted by Spirits	The Magic Art, Vol. II.	12-15
Sedna	The Scapegoat	125-126
Smoking out the Witches	" "	157-159
The Jinnee of the Sea	The Magic Art, Vol. II.	153-154

APPENDIX

Title.	Book.	Pages.
PART III		
QUAINT CUSTOMS		
The Doctor and his Patients	The Magic Art, Vol. I.	83-84
Cure of Jaundice	" "	79-80
Cures for Toothache	The Scapegoat	62-63
Magical Images	The Magic Art, Vol. I.	66-68
Magic Virtue of a Blind Cat and other Creatures	" "	153-155
Longevity Clothes	" "	168-169
Rain-making in China	" "	297-299
Binding the Wind by Magic	" "	325-331
Precautions against Witchcraft	The Magic Art, Vol. II.	52-55
Marriage of the Holy Basil	" "	26-27
Threatening Tree Spirits	" "	20-22
Wild Thyme, Elder Flowers, and Fern .	Balder, II.	64-65
The Magic Flowers at Midsummer Eve : The Springwort and the Woodpecker ; The White Chicory	" "	69-71
Sawing the Old Woman	The Dying God	243
"Seize the Old Man"	Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild, Vol. I.	218-222
Carnival Burnt	The Dying God	222-223
Carnival of Lerida	" "	225-226
The Carnival of Viza	Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild, Vol. I.	26-28
Battle of Summer and Winter	The Dying God	254-256
Queen of Winter and Queen of May . .	" "	258
Mock Beheading of the King on Whit-Monday	" "	209-210

LIST OF EXTRACTS

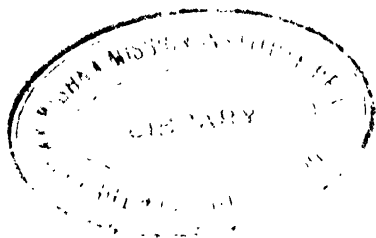
Title.	Book.	Pages.
The Magic Spring	'The Dying God	266-269
Candles lighted to keep off the Witches	Balder, I.	245
The Pigs of the Parson's Wife	" "	275-277
Divining Rods	Balder, II.	67-68
The Baby in the Winnowing Basket	Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild, Vol. I.	6-7
Spinning Tops and Masquerades	" "	94-96
Swinging, Cat's Cradles, and Songs	" "	100-102
Games in Honour of Dead Warriors	'The Dying God	95-96
Games assuming the Character of a Great Fair	" "	98-100
Children of the Moon and Shooting Stars	" "	62-63
The Giants of Dunkirk	Balder, II.	34-35
King Hop	'The Dying God	149-151
The Fire-walk	Balder, II.	10-11
Maraké	Balder, I.	63-64
Bear Festivals	Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild, Vol. II.	182-187
Funeral Oration to the Bear	" "	188-190
Propitiation of Dead Whales	" "	232-235
Sables and Beavers	" "	238-240
Sacred Lions, Leopards, Boa Constrictors, Toads, and Scorpions	" "	288-292
Bilking an Ostrich's Ghost	" "	245
Fish treated with Respect	" "	250-252
Birth of the Grand Lama	The Magic Art, Vol. I.	410-412
Kings of Fire and Water	The Magic Art, Vol. II.	3-6
The Feast of Lanterns	The Scapegoat	151-152
The Saving Virtue of a Nail	" "	64-67

APPENDIX

Title.	Book.	Pages.
PART IV		
MYTHS AND LEGENDS		
St. Romain delivers Rouen from the Dragon	The Magic Art, Vol. II.	164-168
Isis and the Sun God	Taboo and the Perils of the Soul	387-389
The Death of Adonis	Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Vol. I.	226-227
Persephone and Demeter	Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild, Vol. I.	36-37
How the Sea Dyaks learnt to plant Rice .	The Dying God	127-128
Why the Rajahs of Nagpur have the Serpent for their Crest	" "	132-133
King Athamas	" "	161-163
King Vikramaditya	" "	122-123
PART V		
STORIES		
The Miller's Wife and the Two Grey Cats	Balder, I.	319-321
Punchkin and the Parrot	Balder, II.	97-98
Koshchei the Deathless	" "	108-109
The Dragon of the Water-mill	" "	111-113
True Steel	" "	110-111
The Soulless King	" "	113-116
The Giant whose Soul was in a Duck's Egg	" "	126
Headless Hugh	" "	130-131
The Helpful Animals	" "	127-129
The Jinnee and the Sparrow	" "	137
The Heart in the Flower of the Acacia .	" "	134-136
The Wicked Fairy	" "	106-107
The Tree-Elf	The Magic Art, Vol. II.	71-73
The Princess who might not see the Sun .	Balder, I.	70-72

LIST OF EXTRACTS

Title.	Book.	Pages.
PART VI		
LANDSCAPES		
The Woods of Latium	The Magic Art, Vol. II.	188
A Harvest-Home in Cos	Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild, Vol. I.	46-47
The Vale of the Adonis	Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Vol. I.	28-30
The Home of the Cilician Pirates	" "	149-150
The Corycian Cave	" "	153-154
The Baths of Solomon	" "	214-216
The Petrified Cascades of Hierapolis	" "	206-208





398/FRA



32588

